History of the Sikhs

Vol. IV

The Sikh Commonwealth or Rise and Fall of Sikh Misls

History of the Sikhs is planned as a five volume survey aiming to present all aspects—religious, philosophical, political, military, social, economic and cultural, and the contribution of Sikhism to world civilization, in particular to human rights, principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and to the creed of democracy and secularism with the development of Sikh thought and action almost in every direction. The whole series is based on original contemporary sources in English, Gurumukhi, Marathi, Persian, Hindi, and Urdu known to exist in India and abroad.

This fourth volume, *The Sikh Commonwealth or Rise and Fall of Sikh Misls* deals with the rise and fall of Sikh misls. In Sikh history this term was first used by Guru Gobind Singh in the battle Bhangani in 1688, when he organised his forces into eleven misls. Banda Bahadur adopted the same organization of eleven divisions in the battle of Sarhind in May 1719. In 1734 Nawab Kapur Singh divided the Khalsa into Budha Dal and Taruna Dal, both comprising eleven groups. This division was permanently adopted at the formation of Dal Khalsa in 1748.

The Phulkian states were not a Sikh misls. They developed as petty kingdoms from the beginning. They owed allegiance to the Mughals and Durranis, the enemies of their faith. They purchased titles from there. The Sikh misls never agreed to serve under Muslim masters. Lahna Singh Bhangi flatly rejected to become Ahmad Shah Durrani's viceroy of Punjab. Baghel Singh Karorasinghia controlled Delhi for nine months as an independent chief. He thrice turned down Emperor Shah Alam's *farman* appointing him governor of the Upper Ganga Doab.

Dr. Hari Ram Gupta (1902–93), had his education at Lahore. He was the first person to receive the degrees of Ph.D. and D.Litt. in History from the University of the Punjab, Lahore, and his examiners were Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sir Edward Maclagan, ex-Governor of the Punjab and Professor H.H. Dodwell of London University.

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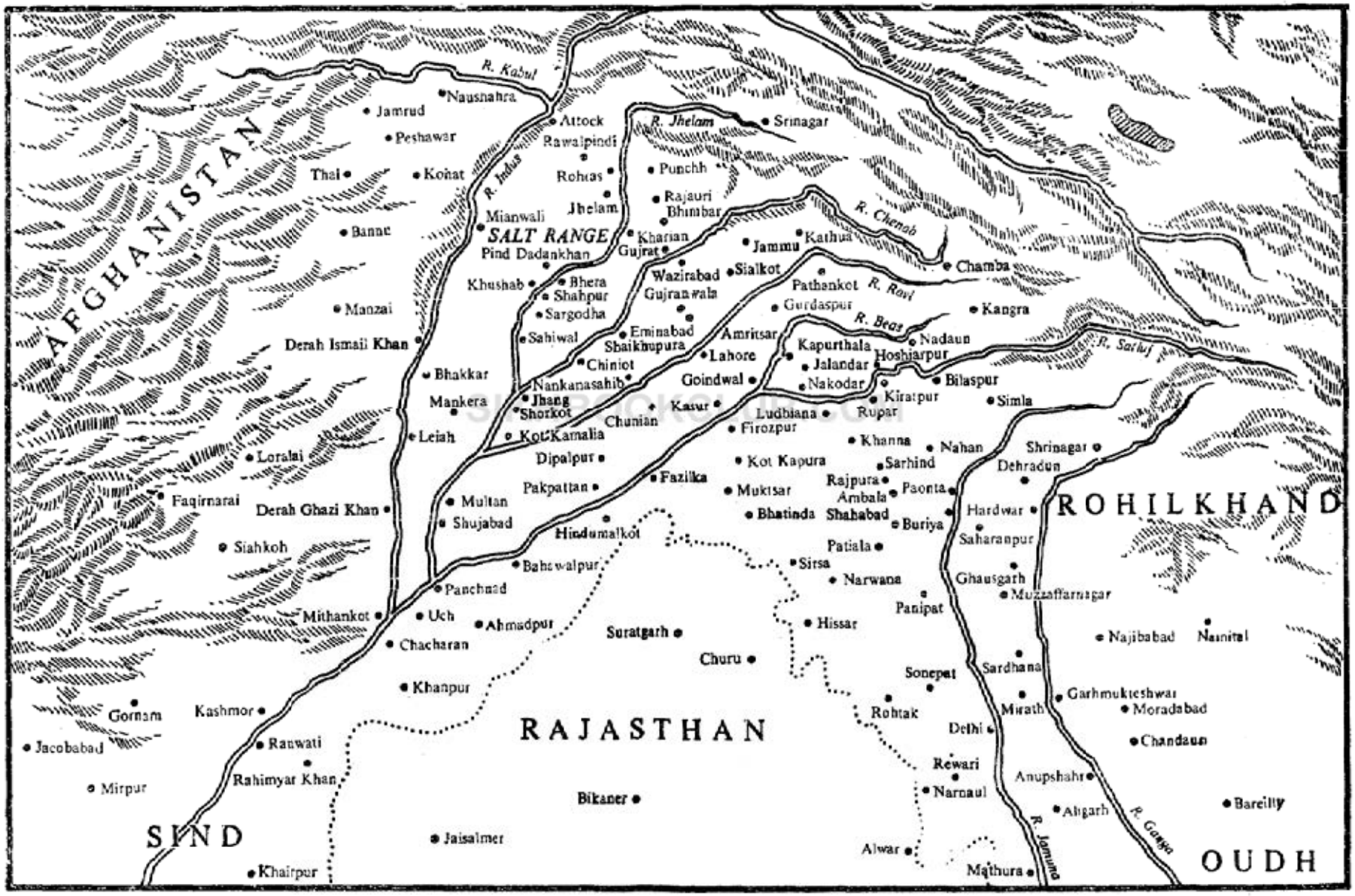
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HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

Vol. IV
The Sikh Commonwealth or Rise and Fall of Sikh Misls

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Hari Ram Gupta



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Dedicated

to

the memory of Giani Kartar Singh,

(1900-June 10, 1974)

Minister in he Panjab Government

who was deeply interested in impartial history of the Sikhs,

and who lived and died as a genuine faqir.

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There are but two powers in the world, the sword and the mind. In the long run the sword is always beaten by the mind.

—*Napoleon*

The safety of the state from within and without is the highest law.

—*Justinian*

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Preface

The book is divided into three parts. Part one deals with the Budha Dal consisting of six misls. The field of its activities lay from river Beas to the Ganga. Its main task was to strike at Delhi. In a body of about 50,000 men, the Budha Dal attacked the Delhi province and the Ganga Doab, two, three, even four times a year continuously from 1764 to 1803. The great Najib-ud-daulah, Dictator of the Mughal Empire, and hero of the third battle of Panipat, was so much harassed by them that he submitted resignation of his office, and without waiting for its acceptance retired to Najibabad, and died a few months later in October, 1770. His son Zabita Khan saved himself by publicly embracing Sikhism under the name of Dharam Singh in 1777. Zabita's son Bhambu Khan and his mother remained Sikh pensioners from 1788 to 1803.

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As for Emperor Shah Alam II, 1759-1806, the crownlands which supported the royal family, were severely squeezed of their material resources. Once all the queens and princesses went without food for three days. Linking their hands they appeared before the Emperor and threatened to drown themselves into the Jamuna. On another occasion the Emperor beat his head with both hands and cried he had no second coat in his wardrobe. He offered Baghel Singh to take charge of the Ganga Doab, but he declined to serve under a Muslim ruler.

Part two concerns the Taruna Dal comprising five misls. It operated from river Beas to the Indus. The Taruna Dal faced the totally Muslim West Panjab as well as the Afghan invaders both being in collusion. Ahmad Shah Durrani was wholly successful against the Marathas. He was partially victorious over the Sikhs only once. During his next two invasions he remained on the defensive. In his last three attempts he could not cross river Jehlam. The Sikhs cut off the claws and broke the teeth of this Afghan lion. Only his growl was left. The Sikhs merely laughed at it. This also ceased with his death in April, 1772.

His son and successor Timur Shah Durrani invaded Panjab five

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times. He did seize Multan from the Sikhs, but he could never reach Lahore. His son Shah Zaman led four invasions. He arrived at Lahore twice. The whole Muslim India and Hindu Rajasthan, castrated by the Great Mughals, hailed him as a liberator. Emperor Shah Alam II offered the invader money and princesses. He could not go beyond Panipat to receive the Afghan king nor could the invader proceed farther than Amritsar. In 1799 Taruna Dal wrote an epitaph in letters of gold on the tomb of the invaders from the north-west. This forms part three of this volume.

The Phulkian States did not join in the Sikh war of independence. They remained loyal both to Delhi and Kandhar-Kabul. Yet they took full advantage of their religious bond with the Dal Khalsa in expanding their territory and material resources.

Of all the Indian people who rose on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, none were more distinguished and outstanding than the Sikhs. Their struggle against the enemies of their faith and homeland was marked by their overwhelming fighting capacity, astonishing energy, stubborn perseverance, unprecedented sacrifices, unshakable faith in their destiny, predicted by Guru Gobind Singh, and the brilliancy of their success.

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Unfortunately for the Sikhs, the spirit of individual freedom, to an abnormal degree, is inherent in the Khalsa brotherhood. The spirit of faction among the Sikh Jats is their inheritance from tribal instinct. The combination of these two factors converted the Sikh misls, in the absence of an external danger, into warring groups among themselves.

To rectify it a leader appeared on the scene. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, Ranjit Singh Sukarchakia had emerged as the most powerful Sikh sardar. He had fully and completely inherited his father's ambition to become the sole monarch of Northern India. No sooner did the foreign invasions come to an end than Ranjit Singh turned against the Sikh misls. In a few years the century-old Sikh nobility was wiped out. In his kingdom only Ahluwalias were saved by the British. All others were mown down like hay.

It was not only an error but also a blunder. The old guards were true Sikhs. They would have been pillars of the Sikh State so assiduously built by the Maharaja. His newly-created-nobility had nothing of Sikhism in them. In the complete absence of national spirit, the religious enthusiasm alone could save it. In proof of this statement one example should suffice. Of all the eleven Sikh misls only Raja Ajit Singh Karorasinghia of Ladwa in Karnal district was alive

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during the first Anglo-Sikh War. The British authorities hated him on account of his connection with the Lahore Durbar. At the outbreak of the war he was shut up in the Saharanpur fort. He escaped and riding in disguise full one day and night reached Baddowal 206 kms distant. He hurriedly collected whatever troops he could and in the battle, according to Sir George Campbell, "Sir Harry Smith was so badly mauled, and lost all his baggage and ammunition." In sharp contrast the part played by Ranjit Singh's own aristocracy, Raja Gulab Singh, prime minister Lal Singh and commander-in-chief Teja Singh has become history.

The role of 150 years old Sikh soldiery in this war stands unrivalled in world history. An Englishman taken prisoner in 1845 asked a Sikh soldier:

What will you do if you win?

We will conquer England.

It is across seven seas

We will build a bridge from Calcutta to London.

This gives an idea of the magnitude of their enthusiasm, optimism, and loyalty to the Sikh kingdom.

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Bottom to top and top to bottom,

This historical fact should not be forgotten.

Banda built the first Sikh State in four years from Ravi to Ganga,

Only in six months the Sikhs themselves burnt it like a *patanga* (moth).

Baghel Singh Karorasinghia controlled Delhi for nine months well,

The Emperor's three offers to assist him further on deaf ears fell.

The misls ruled over whole Panjab, Jammu, Himachal, Ganga Doab and Haryana,

The Sikh sardars themselves besought and planted the English flag at Ludhiana.

Ranjit Singh in forty years founded a mighty monarchy,

In six years the Sikhs themselves destroyed it through anarchy.

Now the Sikhs are on top at the Centre, in Panjabi Suba, in agriculture, business and industry,

How long will they be able to uphold this magnificent position in the country?

From bottom to top and top to bottom is nature's law,

But it should be gradual and not so quick as we above saw.

I express my deep gratitude to my son-in-law, Shri Sham Lal Gupta, for preparing the index.

8/78, Panjabi Bagh,
New Delhi, 110026
25 July, 1982

Hari Ram Gupta

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Part One

The Budha Dal

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CHAPTER 1

Formation of Sikh Misls

SECTION A

Origin of misls in Sikh history

The word misl is common in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Panjabi. It means alike, equal or similar. In Sikh history this term was first used by Guru Gobind Singh on the occasion of the battle of Bhangani in 1688. A large number of young men had thronged to serve under him. He organised them into groups of almost equal number each under a leader. These leaders were granted absolute equality with one another. Thus they were alike and similar in authority.

Sainapat, an eminent poet and scholar in the service of the Guru, has given its account as an eye-witness. The Guru was then living at Paonta in the Sirmur[1] state on the western bank of river Jamuna. The Rajas of the Shivalik hills led an attack on Guru Gobind Singh in 1688. The Guru intercepted them in the nearby valley of Bhangani. Sainapat says that at the call of Ranjit Nagara or war-drum, the horsemen of Guru Gobind Singh immediately gathered on the battlefield under their own banners. The chiefs at the head of their *misls* got busy in digging up trenches or *morchas* at their specified places. Sainapat writes :

1.Bae aswār sangrām ko āp hi Singh Gobind tah thairāe.
2.Dank ki gor jaise bhaī thorat bajat nishān mohre sahāe.
3.Ān ke khet peh dekh chitrang sab morche bāt ke misl lāe.
4.Baji hai bhīr karnāi sunāī sab sune note sur hoe lāl āe.

[1]Sirmur is actually sarmaur, meaning head of the Maur family. It appears that the founder of the state was a member of the family of Chandragupta Maurya, the first empire builder in India. At the time of Alexander's invasion, the Maurya family settled at Sarmaur. A princess of this house occupied the neighbouring hill and called it Morni. A prince brother founded Bharmaur, old name of Chamba State.

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1.Guru Gobind Singh himself went riding to the place of the battle.

2.As soon as the war-drum was beaten war banners came to the front.

3.Reaching the battlefield and examining the positions, he entrusted different fronts to the misls.

4.Different types of musical instruments produced war music which filled the warriors with enthusiasm.

The notable heads of misls under Guru Gobind Singh were Sango Shah, Jitmal, Sangat Rae and Hari Chand. All of them were Guru Gobind Singh's cousins, sons of Bibi Viro, sister of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur. Gulab Rae was another head of a misl. He was the great-grandson of Guru Hargobind and grandson of Suraj Mal. Thus all these five leaders were his relatives. These five misls were under the general command of Sango Shah. The other five misls consisted of about 500 Muslim soldiers under Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura[1] and his four sons. One misl of most daring young men was in command of Guru Gobind Singh himself. Thus there were eleven misls under the supreme command of the Guru. While fighting they were divided into Centre, Right and Left. The Guru was in the centre. His five relatives were on his right, while Pir Budhu Shah was on his left.

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In March, 1699, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa. It was based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. The Khalsa was an association of men for a common objective. It was to save dharma from the destructive policy of Aurangzeb. The Guru conferred the sovereignty of the mother country on his Khalsa :

"Raj jog tum ko main dīna."

Macauliffe describes the anxiety of Guru Gobind Singh thus :

"Mother dear, I have been considering how I may confer empire on the Khalsa."

He fought twenty-one battles to protect life, liberty and *dharma*. Towards the fag end of his life he was staying at Nander in the Deccan. About the middle of September, 1708, Guru Gobind Singh found an apt disciple in his old hunting companion in the jungles of Paonta to carry on his political work in the Panjab. He held a great durbar. There he conferred the title of Banda Bahadur on this disci-

[1]This town is situated at the foot of the Sirmur hills, 12 kms from Naraingarh on the road to Jagadhri, and about 20 kms south of Paonta.

ple, and invested him with political and military authority as his representative. His job was to collect his scattered Khalsa, punish Wazir Khan, the governor of Sarhind province, and establish an independent Sikh state there. Sainapat says this durbar was attended by the Sikhs in misls. He writes :

1.Ghane kuch kine kite divas lāe.
2.Chale shān, gangān te ant āe.
3.Suni thahore Nādr hai nām takā.
4.Kiyā dhām tah Guru Nām Jā kā.
5.Baha Sā tah thūr kine mukāma.
6.Rahe *misl* dar *misl* kar lo dhāmā.
7.Kite divas bīte tah thaher āe.
8.Kathā ant ki ant bhākhi sunāe.

1.He (Guru Gobind Singh) travelled for many days.
2.At last he reached graciously the Ganga (Godavari).
3.There is a place called Nander where he stayed.
4.The Guru converted it into a holy place.
5.Bahadur Shah also encamped at that place.
6.Misl after misl came there for pilgrimage.
7.They stayed there for several days.
8.The narrator will relate the end of the story later on.

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Adoption of Misl system by Banda Bahadur, 1710-1715

At his departure from Nander Banda Bahadur was given by Guru Gobind Singh an advisory council of five leading Sikhs. It consisted of Baj Singh, a descendant of the family of Guru Amar Das, his brother Ram Singh, Binod Singh, who descended from Guru Angad, his son Kahan Singh, and Fatah Singh. Twenty-five Sikh soldiers were given to him as his bodyguard. At the battle of Sarhind[1] in May, 1710, Banda organised his army on the traditional pattern, i.e. centre, right and left. Following the example of Guru Gobind Singh he divided his right wing and left wing each into five misls. The centre was under Banda's own command. His right wing was under Baj Singh, Ram Singh, Fatah Singh, Ali Singh and Mali Singh. His

[1]Sarhind is situated 46 kms west of Ambala city and 37 kms north of Patiala. At this time it had about 360 mosques, tombs, saraes and wells. It was the capital of a province of the same name. It was an accursed city in the eyes of Hindus and Sikhs because Guru Gobind Singh's two younger sons had been brutally murdered there and the Guru's mother had died there of this shock.

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left wing was commanded by Binod Singh, Kahan Singh, Miri Singh, Bijai Singh and Gulab Singh. A brief account of all these ten chiefs is given below :

RIGHT WING

1. *Baj Singh*

Baj Singh was a Bal Jat of village Mirpur in Parganah Patti[1] of Amritsar district. He received baptism from Guru Gobind Singh. He accompanied him to the Deccan. He was one of five members of Banda's advisory council. He commanded a contingent of troops under Banda at Samana and Sadhaura. In the battle of Sarhind he faced Suchanand, chief secretary of Wazir Khan, governor of Sarhind. Suchanand was defeated and he fled away. The thickest battle raged in the centre, where Banda was facing Wazir Khan. Having vanquished Wazir Khan's left wing, Baj Singh rushed to help Banda. Mir Muhammad Ahsan Ijāz, court historian of Delhi and resident of Samana, a contemporary, says that Baj Singh rushed upon Wazir Khan. The governor hurled his spear at him. Baj Singh caught it. He flung the same spear upon Wazir Khan. It struck the forehead of his horse. Wazir Khan discharged an arrow which hit Baj Singh's arm. Wazir Khan then pounced upon Baj Singh. Fatah Singh came to the rescue of Baj Singh. He struck his sword upon Wazir Khan so forcefully that it cut his shoulder to the waist. Meanwhile Banda had repulsed Wazir Khan's army. He joined the hand-to-hand fight. Macauliffe says that Banda cut off Wazir Khan's head.

After the conquest of Sarhind, Banda appointed Baj Singh governor of Sarhind province.[2] In the schism between Tatva Khalsa and Bandai Sikhs in October, 1714, Baj Singh remained with Banda. He was taken prisoner along with Banda in December, 1715. Banda was executed on June 9, 1716, and Baj Singh on June 10. Banda Bahadur's organisation of misls lasted only for about five years from 1710 to 1715.

2. *Ram Singh*

Ram Singh was the younger brother of Baj Singh. He was baptised

[1]The town of Patti is situated 64 kms south-east of Lahore on the road leading to Hari Ke Patan, the confluenceof rivers Beas and Satluj. This parganah contained 1360 villages.

[2]It extended from the Shivalik hills in the north to the desert of Bikaner in the south, and from river Jamuna in the east to river Satluj in the west. It commanded revenues worth half a crore.

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by Guru Gobind Singh. He was sent by the Guru from Nander as an adviser of Banda. In the battle of Sarhind he fought in the right wing under Baj Singh. After the battle he was appointed district officer of Thanesar. Ram Singh and Binod Singh fought a battle at Taraori, 12 kms north of Karnal against Firoz Khan Mewati, commander of the advance-guard of the army of Emperor Bahadur Shah. The Sikh generals were defeated. They fell back being pursued by the Mewati. They fought two battles at Thanesar and Shahabad, in both of which they lost the day. After the death of Bahadur Shah in February, 1712, Ram Singh was given charge of Ludhiana. In the schism Ram Singh firmly stood by Banda. He was taken prisoner at Gurdas Nangal, and was executed at Delhi on June 10, 1716.

3. *Fatah Singh*

Fatah Singh was the first Sikh officer appointed by Banda in charge of district Samana consisting of nine parganahs. In the battle of Sarhind he served as deputy commander-in-chief, in charge of general supervision. In the thickest fight between Banda and Wazir Khan, Fatah Singh came to the rescue of Baj Singh, and cut Wazir Khan from shoulder to waist. After the battle he retained his rank and was ordered to move about to suppress any rebellion and disorder. Emperor Bahadur Shah besieged Banda's fort of Lohgarh in December, 1710. Banda escaped into the hills. Fatah Singh remained behind to continue the fight. On the fall of the fort, he was taken prisoner and imprisoned in the Red Fort at Delhi along with Ali Singh, Gulab Singh, and Raja Bhup Prakash of Nahan. Fatah Singh was executed on June 10, 1716.

4. *Ali Singh*

Ali Singh belonged to village Salaudi near Sarhind. He was in the service of governor Wazir Khan of Sarhind. On the advance of Banda towards Sarhind, Ali Singh deserted his post and joined Banda. He was appointed head of a misl under Baj Singh. On the fall of Sarhind, Ali Singh was appointed deputy governor under Baj Singh. Ali Singh was taken prisoner on the fall of Lohgarh fort in December, 1710, and was imprisoned in the Red Fort at Delhi. He was executed on June 10, 1716.

5. *Mali Singh*

Mali Singh was a brother of Ali Singh. He belonged to village

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Salaudi near Sarhind. He was in the service of Wazir Khan, and later on joined Banda Bahadur. He fought in the battle of Sarhind at the head of a misl. Nothing is known about his later life. It seems that he was killed in the battle.

LEFT WING

1. *Binod Singh*

Binod Singh descended from Guru Angad. He followed Guru Gobind Singh from Delhi to Nander. He was sent to Panjab with Banda as a member of his advisory body of five. In the battle of Sarhind Binod Singh commanded the left wing of Banda's army. Binod Singh was pitched against Sher Muhammad Khan of Malerkotla,[1] who was commander of Wazir Khan's right wing. There the fighting was so hard that Binod Singh's flank was about to give way. Just then Sher Muhammad Khan was struck by a bullet and he was instantly killed. His men immediately dispersed.

After Banda's conquest of Sarhind province, the frontier district of Karnal, bordering on the Delhi territory was entrusted to Binod Singh. Emperor Bahadur Shah hurried to suppress Banda's revolt. Firoz Khan Mewati[2] commanded the advance-guard of the imperial army. Binod Singh fought four actions to check him, and suffered defeat every time. The first engagement took place at Taraori, 12 kms north of Karnal, second at Amin, 25 kms north of Karnal, third at Thanesar, 21 kms farther north and the fourth at Shahabad, 22 kms north of Thanesar.

In the schism of Banda's ranks into Tatva Khalsa and Bandai Sikhs in October, 1714, Binod Singh with 10,000 followers parted company from Banda. But he was in two minds. He wanted to obey Mata Sundari's command, and at the same time was opposed to fight against Banda. He remained at Amritsar. He was taken to Gurdas Nangal in the Mughal army to fight on their side. There he tried to retire without fighting.

No sooner had Binod Singh started moving away at the head of his 10,000 men, than he was attacked by the imperialists on all sides. According to Khafi Khan three or four thousand of his men were

[1]Malerkotla was a small Afghan state with an area of 165 square miles and population 71,000. The town is situated 45 kms south of Ludhiana.

[2]Mewat is a hilly tract in Gurgaon district. The Mewatis are Muslims. In those days they were a warlike and ferocious people given to thieving, robbery and cattle-lifting.

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massacred at once, and the extensive plain was filled with blood as if it were a dish. Those who escaped were captured by the Muslims and the roving bands of imperial army. Two thousand Sikh heads with their long flowing hair stuffed with hay and a thousand men bound with iron chains were sent by Abdus Samad Khan under the charge of his son Zakariya Khan to Emperor Farrukh[1] Siyar at Delhi. Binod Singh lost his life in this carnage.

2. *Kahan Singh*

Kahan Singh was the son of Binod Singh. He was one of the five members which constituted Banda's advisory council at Nander. In the battle of Sarhind he served under his father, as head of his own misl. After the fall of Sarhind Banda appointed him deputy to his father at Karnal to strengthen the position of the Warden of the Marches. There the Mughal army from Delhi was to be opposed first of all. Under pressure of Emperor Farrukh Siyar, Mata Sundari who was living in Delhi, excommunicated Banda Bahadur, and ordered the Sikhs to desert him. The first persons to obey the orders of Mata Sundari were Kahan Singh and his son Miri Singh. Binod Singh also supported them. Thus about 15,000 men broke off from BandaBahadur They called themselves Tatva Khalsa or the true Sikhs. A body of 5,000 Sikhs under Kahan Singh and Miri Singh took up service with Abdus Samad Khan, governor of Lahore. Each horseman was paid Rs. 30 per mensem and a footman Rs. 5 a month, and a sardar Rs. 5 daily. The remaining 10,000 under Binod Singh were provided residence at Amritsar with free board and lodging. The entire revenues of parganah Chubhal were reserved for this purpose. This took place in October, 1714. Kahan Singh was ordered to join the imperial army in the siege of Gurdas Nangal against Banda. Kahan Singh declined. He was sent to Delhi as a prisoner in the retinue of Banda in January, 1716. The massacre of Sikhs began in batches of one hundred prisoners each day in front of the Kotwali in Chandni Chauk. Mata Sundari resolved to save the life of Kahan Singh. The Mughal officers and guards were heavily bribed, and another Sikh was put in place of Kahan Singh. His later history is unknown.

3. *Miri Singh*

Miri Singh was the son of Kahan Singh and grandson of Binod

[1]Farrukh Siyar ruled from 1713 to 1718.

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Singh. He was a young man in his early twenties. He fought in the battle of Sarhind on May 12, 1710, as head of his own misl. He was a dashing youth of reckless courage. Banda did not give him an independent charge of a district and attached him with Binod Singh and Kahan Singh, to enable them to put up a strong defence of the frontier post, considering it as a family affair. The Mughal Emperors had also entrusted the administration of Panjab, Jammu and Kashmir to the members of the same family, who were related to prime minister of the Mughal Empire. The initiative in the schism was taken by Miri Singh. His fiery temper and vindictive spirit did not allow him to show any consideration to expediency and delicacy of the time. His father fully supported him, while his grandfather, Binod Singh, was half-hearted.

A contingent of 5,000 Sikhs under Kahan Singh and Miri Singh took up service under Abuds Samad Khan. Binod Singh with 10,000 Sikhs stayed at Amritsar. Nothing was heard about Miri Singh except that he was a sworn enemy of Banda. In all probability he perished at Lahore along with 5,000 Sikhs after the capture of Banda.

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4. *Bijai Singh*

Bijai Singh commanded a misl at the battle of Sarhind on May 12, 1710. Nothing is known about his earlier and later career, except a bare reference by Gian Singh and Bhai Kahan Singh.

5. *Gulab Singh*

Gulab Singh was the great-grandson of Guru Hargobind. His father's name was Dipchand and grand father was Surajmal, son of Guru Hargobind. He was baptised by Guru Gobind Singh who changed his name from Gulab Rae to Gulab Singh. On Banda's arrival in the Panjab Gulab Singh joined him. He had a great resemblance with Banda, so he kept him with himself as his duplicate. In the siege of Lohgarh in December, 1710, Banda, while escaping, left Gulab Singh in his place. Gulab Singh was captured on December 11, 1710. There were great rejoicings in the imperial camp thinking that Banda had been captured. On December 12, the real position of Gulab Singh was discovered. According to Khafi Kahn "the hawk had flown and an owl had been caught."

On December 13, Bhup Prakash, Raja of Nahan, was arrested for not having captured Banda while escaping through his territory. He and Gulab Singh were put in an iron cage and sent to Delhi with a

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few other prisoners. Gulab Singh was beheaded on June 10, 1716.

Thus the prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh was fulfilled in nineteen months. The Sikhs had become masters of a large part of the country lying between the rivers Satluj and the Jamuna. The Bāwani Sarhind worth fifty-two lakhs of rupees annually, lay at the feet of the Khalsa. The Sikhs set themselves up as rulers, issued their own coin, and carried their arms up to the Ganga in the east and to the Ravi on the west. The sovereignty was enjoyed by the Sikhs only for a short period of five years.[1]

This lesson was never forgotten by the Sikhs even under the severest persecution that followed Banda's execution in 1716. Firm faith and high hopes, power of resistance and tenacity of purpose were the main features of Sikh character during their war of independence. Their strong religious spirit, great enthusiasm for freedom and close unity of their brotherhood, maintained by common grievances, common objectives and constant fear kept them in a cheerful frame of mind even under the most desperate circumstances.

[1]Khushwant Singh, the leading Sikh Journalist and Editor of *The Hindustan Times*, pays negative tribute to the founder of political power of the Sikhs thus : ".....the spirit of Punjabi nationalism which had almost been killed by Banda". [Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, I, 1469-1839, p. 183.]

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SECTION B

Origin of Budha Dal and Taruna Dal

The misls remained out of existence from 1716 to 1733. In 1734 Nawab Kapur Singh divided the Khalsa into two groups on the basis of age. The troops commanded by older leaders were called the Budha Dal or the Veterans, and the forces under command of younger men were termed the Taruna Dal or Verdants. Each group was further subdivided into five units on the model of the misls of Guru Gobind Singh's time. The Budha Dal remained at Hari Mandar and the holy tank. The five derahs or encampments of the Taruna Dal were established at different tanks at Amritsar known as Bibeksar, Kaulsar, Lachhmansar, Ramsar and Santokhsar. Kapur Singh retained the command of both the Dals as well as his own jatha or band or misl. In addition to Kapur Singh, the other leaders of the Budha Dal were Bhag Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Gurdial Singh, Karora Singh, and Sham Singh. The leaders of the Taruna Dal were Bir Singh, Dasaundha Singh, Dharam Singh, Dip Singh and Jiwan Singh. Thus eleven units were established as in the time of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur.

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The Sikhs never lost sight of their political ideal, and tney concentrated their attention chiefly on Sarhind province. This was due to the fact that this region had been the avenue of activities of seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth Gurus, as well as of Banda Bahadur.

Some time after the departure of Nadir Shah the Sikhs tried to establish their rule there. The contemporary author, Harcharndas says:

"In 1740, a year after the departure of Nadir Shah, a large body of Jats and Sikhs assembled, marched towards Sarhind, and created great disturbances. They set up Daranat Shah (Dip Singh ?) as their leader, and seized many lands there. When this news was brought to the notice of Emperor Muhammad Shah, he appointed Azimullah Khan to chastise these rebels. Azimullah Khan arrived in that district, defeated, and dispersed them, and then retired to Shahjahanabad."

The Dal Khalsa, 1748

On March 29, 1748, the day of Baisakhi, all the members of the Khalsa brotherhood had gathered at Amritsar to celebrate the festival. Nawab Kapur Singh invited the whole congregation to gather before the Akal Takht. In a stirring speech he explained that hard times were ahead of them, on account of Muin's appointment as Panjab viceroy and the expected invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali. To save the Panth, a strong and united Khalsa was essential. He named this organisation the Dal Khalsa. He placed it under the command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

There were about sixty-five Sikh bands under various leaders. Kapur Singh reduced them into eleven units following his old organisation of 1734. Almost all the writers on Sikh history hold that the Dal Khalsa was divided into twelve misls. They include Phulkian states which arose to power at the same time as the Sikh misls. In reality the Phulkian states were not a Sikh misl.

Ratan Singh Bhangu in *Prachin Panth Prakash* on page 565 puts their number at ten. He excludes Shahids and Phulkian. Sayyid Ghulam Bhik Jalandhari in his Urdu manuscript, *T-warikh Wakar*, page 46, names eleven misls. Kartar Singh Kalaswalia does not include Phulkian but puts their number at twelve. He includes Kalsia as an independent misl, while it was a part of the Karorasinghia misl. (*Tegh Khalsa*, 215)

Karam Singh[1] historian declares that there were only ten misls.

The exclusion of Shahids from Sikh misls seems to be based on the

[1] *Jiwan Britant Maharaj Alha Singh*, p. 195.

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idea that they were mainly a religious body and not a military or political body. This idea is not based on facts. They were great fighters and participated in most of the expeditions of Dal Khalsa and were second to none in acquiring booty and territory. They had in addition religious sanctity. It was for this reason that the Shahids commanded the greatest respect. When Ranjit Singh invaded Naraingarh and swept away all the smaller misls on his way, he did not touch Shahzadpur, the headquarters of Shahids, only 10 kms west of Naraingarh lying on his way, and he passed by it.

Sir Lepel Griffin is of the view that there were only eight misls and four derahs. The Nishanwalas, the Nakais, the Shahids and the Karorasinghisas were, according to him derahs, which he considered too small to be included in the category of misls. Sir Denzil Ibbetson supports Griffin's view. He says that these four groups occupied very small tracts of land and could not be called confederacies.

These opinions are erroneous. A study of the military strength, territorial acquisitions, and the part played by some of their leaders as described in the following pages will expose the fallacy of these views.

Bute Shah defines a Sikh misl as follows :

1. A person draws towards him Sikh young men by his bravery, generosity, devotion and service of the Panth.
2. He administers pahul to them and wins them over as his life-long companions.
3. He assigns lands, villages and taluqas to them according to the number of their followers.
4. Such a person is called Sardar of the misl, and all others are known as misldars or feudal retainers.
5. The whole organisation under one leader is called misl.

A Sikh writer in *The Khalsa Advocate*, the defunct monthly English organ of the Sikhs, dated October 15, 1904, defined the misl thus : "Men of one occupation or locality formed themselves into separate sub-groups and called them Misals. Misal generally consisted of men of allied profession under a headman from a certain village or town. These groups, as a rule, were named after a particular place or profession."

A misl was named after its leader, or his native village, or region, or some peculiar trait of the leader or some special functions performed by it. The former division of Budha Dal and Taruna Dal was retained. The Budha Dal consisted of six misls—Ahluwalia, Dallewalia. Faizullahpuria also known as Singhpuria, Karorasinghia, Nishan-

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wala and Shahid. The Taruna Dal comprised five misls—Bhangi, Kanhiya, Nakai, Ramgarhia and Sukarchakia.

The founders and other leaders of these misls belonged mainly to Majha.[1] Six misls were founded by men of Amritsar district, four misls by leaders of Lahore district, and the eleventh by an inhabitant of Firozpur district in Malwa to the east of river Satluj. In general all these men were called Majhails. Eight misls were founded by Jats, one by a Khatri, one by a Kalal, and one by a carpenter. The Phulkian states also belonged to Jats.

The first formation of the misls under Guru Gobind Singh lasted for twenty years from 1688 to 1708. Under Banda Bahadur it existed for five years from 1710 to 1715. The third formation in 1734 lived for fourteen years. In 1748, the organisation of the misls was destined to last for more than half a century until they were swept away by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British Government.

Majha

Majha is the middle part of the Bari Doab. It lies between the Ravi and the Beas also Ghara after its confluence with river Satluj. It consists of the districts of Lahore, Amritsar and southern parts of Gurdaspur district. This tract was deficient in rainfall. There were neither wells nor canals. To make up the deficiency to some extent the Gurus constructed tanks at a number of places. Majha was the main field of activities of the first six Gurus. The Majha Sikhs possessed reckless courage and a life of adventure. Under the guidance of Gurus the people of Majha called Majhails[1] developed into the finest soldiers the world has ever seen. Due to the encouragement of Sikh Gurus this region became a breeding ground of fine horses. The independence of the Panjab and closing the invaders' gateways were exclusively due to the Majha Jats. He knew of no compromise. He either won or lost.

The Sikhs of the Jalandhar Doab lying between the Beas and the Satluj consisting of the districts of Kapurthala, Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur, were akin to Majhails rather than to Malwais.

In Griffin's estimation 7,50,000 Sikhs lived in the trans-Satluj region. The Majha Sikhs appear to be the descendents of the tribe known

[1]The Sikhs were known by the territories they inhabited. Those living in the Cis-satluj region were called Malwais, in the Jalandhar Doab, the Doabias, of Majha as Majhails, south of Lahore as Nakais, between Ravi and Jehlam the Dharapi Sikhs, and between the Jehlam and the Indus Pothohar Sikhs.

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as Kathaians or Kathis. In the time of Alexander the Great they formed a powerful republic. They lived between the Ravi and the Beas in the territory now occupied by the districts of Lahore and Amritsar. Their capital was Sangala or Samkala which is identified as Jandiala. The most striking features of these people were their sound physique, good looks, and military skill. Beauty was the only criterion for marriage. Their children were brought up according to the rules and regulations of the state, and not according to the will of the parents. The medical officers of the state held the examination in the second month after the child's birth. In case of any deformity in the limbs or ugliness the child was killed.

They declined to submit to Alexander. Around their capital they erected three lines of defence. Each circle consisted of chariots. Alexander destroyed the outer-most defence. He failed to take the second circle. King Porus joined him with a large number of elephants and 6,000 troops. The Kathis entered the town. Alexander had to erect siege-machines. The capital was eventually captured and the people were massacred. In the battle 17,000 Kathis were killed and 70,000 were taken prisoners. The city was completely destroyed. The country of the republic was made over to Porus.

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Malwa

The Malwa Sikhs called Malwais are the descendents of Malloi or Malava republic of Alexander's time. They lived in the lower region between rivers Chenab and Ravi. Their capital was at a place now called Kot Kamalia. They got ready to oppose the invader. They were joined by another neighbouring tribe. The allied army consisted of 90,000 foot, 10,000 horse and 900 chariots. They had a number of towns and cities. In one town inhabited by Brahmans alone, 5,000 of them laid down their lives in fighting. Another town had a lofty wall around it. While scaling over the wall, Alexander was severely wounded by an arrow. When it fell, all men, women and children were slaughtered. After some time the Malavas left the Panjab. They crossed the Satluj. Many of them settled in Bhatinda region, while the rest went to Madhya Pradesh. Both the regions inhabited by them came to be called Malwa.

The Malwa region of the Panjab lies between the Satluj and the Ghaggar. It comprises the districts of Firozpur, Faridkot, Bhatinda, Ludhiana, Sangrur, Patiala, Rupar, the Union Territory of Chandigarh and a part of Ambala district. Malwa was main field of activities of the

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last four Gurus and Banda Bahadur. The Malwa Sikhs were diplomatic. They believed in bowing down before the storm, and raising their heads erect after the storm had blown over. Griffin estimated the total population of the Sikhs in Cis-Satluj region at five lakhs.

The Rakhi and Kambali

The next stage in the growth and development of the Sikh misls was the establishment of protectorates or Rakhi and Kambali. They were introduced in Panjab and in the Ganga Doab. The misls as members of the Dal Khalsa were organised on March 29, 1748. Muin-ul-Mulk took charge of Panjab as its viceroy a few days later in the beginning of April, 1748. He was an able, energetic and strict disciplinarian. He ruthlessly persecuted the Sikhs. During his rule the Sikhs could hold themselves with utmost difficulty. He died on November 3, 1753. Then Panjab plunged into anarchy. Disorders, confusion and chaos reigned supreme. In three years from 1753 to 1756 nine changes took place in the office of the governor. The administration broke down completely.

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The peasantry of the Panjab had been ruined by the revenue farmers, government troops, invaders, influx of hungry people from Central Asia and the Sikh plundering bands. Trade had come to a stop as the roads and ways had become quite unsafe. People were living in a state of constant fear and danger.

This state of affairs offered a golden chance to the Sikhs. They were the only well-organised people in the Panjab. They inspired awe in the minds of common people, local refractory persons and government officials. The Sikh leaders offered a plan to individual villages for their safety and security. A village as a whole was to place itself under the protection of the Dal Khalsa, owing obedience to a particular chief. The village headman would collect from all the inhabitants a sum equal to one fifth of the Government revenue twice a year in May and October-November at the end of each harvest called *Asarhi* and *Sawani* or *Rabi* and *Kharif*, spring and autumn crops. This amount was to be paid to the Sikh sardar on demand. Delays, excuses and refusals were fatal. The Sikhs in return offered full protection against plunder, maltreatment or molestation either by themselves, or by local robbers and dacoits and by government officials. In a word, safety of their persons and property was guaranteed. At the time of a foreign invasion, the people were allowed to move away in peace. The amount paid by the people was called *Rakhi*.

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This experiment in single villages located here and there worked so successfully that clusters of villages or even the whole tracts accepted the protection of the Sikhs. Different misls of the Dal Khalsa occupied specific areas. In the beginning generally two misls combined in view of the great dangers they had to face in controlling one region. A reserve force was stationed at Amritsar to help them in an emergency. Other misls could also be invited to join them in facing a serious menace.

Thus the misls of Karora Singh and Dip Singh (Shahid) went to the southern bank of the Satluj in Malwa in the districts of Ludhiana and Firozpur. Singhpurias and Ahluwalias settled in the lower parts of the Jalandhar Doab in the districts of Jalandhar and Kapurthala. Jai Singh Kanhiya and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia worked in common in the upper portions of the Jalandhar Doab and Bari Doab in the districts of Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur. The Nakais preferred their own home district Naka south of Lahore now known as Montgomery district. The Nishanwalas and Dallewalias guarded Amritsar or Guru Ki Nagri and served as a reserve force. Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Hari Singh Bhangi who were the most adventurous and dare-devil chiefs penetrated into purely Muslim regions of hostile people in the Bari, Rachna and Chaj Doabs in the districts of Multan, Sialkot, Shaikhupura, Gujranwala, Gujrat and Jehlam.

The Phulkian chiefs of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot, etc., though never a part of the Dal Khalsa, established their supremacy in the Sarhind province about the same time. They were diplomatic rulers, always owing allegiance to the Mughals at Delhi and the Durranis of Afghanistan. Simultaneously, they won over the Sikh chiefs of Majha in case of need by appealing to their religious sentiments, entertaining them with karahprasad, getting baptism from them, offering their daughters in marriage to them, and even by paying tribute.

The Rakhi was considered as a sacred trust by all the Sikhs. The non-Sikh lawless elements could not dare offend the Dal Khalsa, as instant retribution was at hand. The Rakhi system served a very useful purpose. It offered security to the people, gave a sure source of income to the Sikhs, and converted them into a class of big landlords, administrators and rulers. The cultivator could apply his plough and sickle and the trader could ply his business in peace. Nobody could interfere with them.

The Rakhi was charged in the form of cash or kind as it suited the

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convenience of the people. It varied from one-eighth to one-half of the profit or one-fifth of the rental value of the land fixed by authorities depending upon the capacity of the people to pay. It resembled the Maratha Chauth. The Maratha records declare that the Sikhs collected one-fourth of the yearly revenue. It is further stated that they realized *ghās-dānā* or the fodder for animals at the rate of one-fourth. According to James Browne, Rakhi was one-fifth of the annual rent. The Rakhi system was applied only to Panjab, and upper classes in the Ganga Doab.

In a village situated at the centre of a cluster of villages and inhabited by lawless people, the Sikh sardar erected a fort. In the course of a few years the whole country was dotted by Sikh forts built on a prominent and commanding site. Each fort was garrisoned by a strongly armed contingent. The refractory and stubborn people were imprisoned in its underground cells often to perish for want of food and water. In consequence nobody dared defy a Sikh chief. The merchants and wealthy people built their houses around the fort for safety and security. It was for this reason that Amritsar became the largest and richest town in the Panjab.

From 1764 to 1803, the Sikhs raided the Ganga Doab from Garhwal in the north to Farrukhabad in the south. They established their protectorates, particularly in the districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut. Their raids took place many a time in the year whenever it struck their imagination. The contemporary writer William Francklin states that the Sikhs gathered in small batches on the banks of river Jamuna near the ferries. Then on crossing the river they would demand blackmail at the rate of two annas in the rupee of revenue meaning one-eighth or 12.5 per cent. When the tribute was paid quietly and immediately on demand, they would depart without causing any trouble. If it was objected, delayed or refused, the consequences were serious. Generally one or two horsemen appeared in a village, but a full regiment was not far off. They would lay waste the fields, set houses on fire, seize all the good cattle and horses, and take prisoners for ransom. The protection money was charged twice a year at the end of each harvest in May and October. Dues for cotton and sugar-cane were realized in December or January.

Kambali meant blanket money, because the minimum amount charged from a single family was equal to the price of a kambal or blanket, from two to three rupees. The Rakhi was levied on

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zamindars, traders and merchants. Kambali was realized from artisans. The people were so much cowed down that no village could resist the demand even by one Sikh horseman. Not to speak of the common folk, even the big and powerful chiefs quietly submitted. Zabita Khan, son and successor of all-powerful Najib-ud-daulah, the Dictator of the Mughal Empire, tamely conceded the right of Rakhi and Kambali to the Sikhs. Najaf Khan, the prime minister of the Mughal Empire, granted the right of Rakhi and Kambali to the Sikhs under a royal patent in 1781. In February, 1783, George Forster saw only two Sikh horsemen at Srinagar, capital of Garhwal state. He writes : "No sooner had they alighted than beds were prepared for their repose, and their horses were supplied with green barley pulled out of the field." The Raja submissively paid them a sum of Rs. 4,000 being the amount of his annual tribute.

In the Panjab Rakhi granted full protection to the people against oppression by the Sikhs or government officials and foreign invaders. In the Ganga Doab Rakhi and Kambali offered protection against the attacks of the Sikhs only. There were other plunderers also in the Ganga Doab. The Gujars, the Mewatis and Marathas frequently invaded this region and fleeced the people, Hindus and Muslims alike. The Sikhs offered no help to the masses against these predatory people. That is why the Sikh charges in the Ganga Doab amounted only to one eighth of the government dues, and in Panjab to one-fifth, or more. They could not afford full protection to the people in the Ganga Doab as the Sikh forces were not present there all the time. They visited this region only twice a year for a short period. Their raids occurred only when the people defied them, or when the Sikhs craved for an adventure due to their over-flowing energy and enthusiasm or even greed. They resorted only to plunder and scrupulously avoided raping women. This was due to the injunction of Guru Gobind Singh who decreed:

"Par nāri ki sej,
bhūl supne hun nā jāiyo."

[Go not ye, even in dream, to the bed of a woman other than your own wife.]

Warren Hastings, the governor-general of Bengal, in a minute presented to his Council on 14 December, 1784, about the Sikh activities in the Delhi region and the Ganga Doab recorded :

"For some years past the Sikhs quitting their predatory incursions have fixed themselves in the lands which submitted to them, appoint-

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ing collectors of their revenues, and officers for their government. No opposition was made to them."

The Sikh Commonwealth

The Rakhi system laid the foundation of territorial chieftainships of the Sikhs and the Sikh Commonwealth. It was divided for political and military purposes into eleven misls or confederacies. The Sikh religion, a pure theocracy, permitted no distinction of rank or position among the members of the Khalsa brotherhood. The Sikh Commonwealth was thus founded on perfectly democratic principles.

There was a gradual development in the position and status of Sikh chiefs. Under Guru Gobind Singh they were soldiers and commanders. In Banda Bahadur's time they were soldiers, commanders and administrators. After the foundation of the Dal Khalsa they became Rakhas or protectors also. On the retirement of Ahmad Shah Durrani they developed into territorial chieftains or lords of domains, popularly, called Sardars.

Under these eleven big sardars there were many smaller sardars. They were called misldars. Their number varied between 400 and 500. The chiefs were addressed as Singh Sahib, and misldars as Sardarji.

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East and West

The Budha Dal was led by elderly men. The Taruna Dal was commanded by young leaders. They had only two enemies in Ahmad Shah Durrani, and his lieutenant Najib-ud-daulah Rohilla, the dictator of the Mughal Empire from 1761 to 1770 until his death. It was considered desirable that one division of the Dal Khalsa should concentrate against the Durrani monarch, and the other against the Rohilla chief at Delhi as well as the Mughal Emperors, both of whom were great supporters of the Durranis. It implied parting of the ways into the east and into the west. The occupation of territories was also to take place in their respective zones, as far as possible with minor adjustments. The Budha Dal was less adventurous, and so it decided to have the eastern region.

The Taruna Dal was jubilant. Its leaders were at their best in facing the greatest dangers. Their area was overwhelmingly Muslim in population. They were hardy and warlike people as Chathas, Gakhars, Khokhars, Pathans, Afghans and Baluchis. Besides, they owed allegiance to the Durranis. The Afghan governors had their

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strongholds at Peshawar, Attock, Hazara, Kashmir, Multan, Bahawalpur, and Derajat as well as in Sind. The Budha Dal suggested that river Ravi should form the dividing line. The Taruna Dal proposed river Satluj as the border. The leaders of both the parts were bent upon possessing their holy city of Amritsar. After a great deal of discussion and debate river Beas and the Ghara or river Satluj after its confluence with the Beas at Hari Ke Patan[1] was accepted as the approximate limit between the two parts. Amritsar was declared to be the common city for all, though for administration the Bhangi Misl had it, because its members were active in both the regions. They commanded the passage on the Indus at Attock in the west, and the ferry on the Jamuna at Buriya in the east, dominated Kohala entrance to Kashmir on the Jehlam in the north and ruled over Multan, the southern gateway into India via Bolan Pass. The other misls closely connected with Amritsar were Ahluwalia, Kanhiya and Ramgarhia.

[1]From Mandi to Hari Ke Patan there were thirty-two *ghats* or ferries on river Beas.

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Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, III, p. 62; *Shamsher Khalsa*, 47-48, 78.
Ramjas, Diwan, *Tarikh Khāndān Ahluwalian, Wāli-e-Kapurthala*, 42-44.
Sayyid Ghulam Bhik, *Twarikh Wākar*, 46.
Tarikh-e-Sidhu, 127.

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CHAPTER 2

The Ahluwalia Misl

JASSA SINGH AHLUWALIA

Early life

Ahlu was a small village situated about 20 kms south-east of Lahore. There lived a young man named Badar Singh of the Kalal caste known as distillers of wine.[1] He was married to the sister of Baghu of nearby village Hallo Sadho. Baghu became a Sikh under the name of Bāgh Singh. The two brothers-in-law served under Banda Bahadur. After Banda's execution in 1716, most of the Sikhs reverted to Hinduism. The more faithful Sikhs dispersed into the desert of Hansi and Hisar to save themselves from the fury of their persecutors. It was there that Badar Singh got a son in 1718, named Jassa Singh. Badar Singh died in 1722. Bagh Singh found it difficult to take charge of the young widow and her little son.

Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi were then living in Delhi. Mata Sundari was acting as head of the Khalsa. The mother and child were placed under the protection of Mata Sundari. They lived with her for six or seven years. The young lady possessed a sweet and melodious voice and daily sang hymns from the Adi Granth. The child was brought up by Mata Sundari as her own son. He picked up the ways and manners of Dilliwalas. He spoke Hindustani, put on Hindustani dress and adopted the etiquette of the imperial capital. He learnt reading and writing Gurmukhi and committed to memory several hymns of Gurus.

[1]As the manufacture and sale-purchase of liquors came under government control, the Kalals gave up the profession of distillation and took to trade and commerce. Denzil Ibbetson observed a hundred years ago : "They are notorious for enterprise, energy and obstinacy. Death may budge, but a Kalal won't." Of their population about half were Hindus, one quarter Sikhs and one quarter Musalmans.

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After Banda's death for five or six years the Sikhs had no leader. Then Kapur Singh began to emerge as their main guide. The Sikhs used to send their offerings collectively to Mata Sundari. Kapur Singh who was rising to importance among his comrades decided to visit Delhi about 1728 to pay homage and money to Mata Sundari. Bagh Singh was anxious to meet his sister and nephew. With a few more companions disguised as Muslims they reached Delhi. Kapur Singh was deeply struck by the physical appearance, affable manners and intelligence of the ten-year-old lad, Jassa Singh. He was also highly impressed with the religious devotion and spirit of service of his mother. He offered to adopt the boy as his foster son and to train him in guerilla warfare which was then in vogue with the Sikhs.

Mata Sundari assented. At the time of departure she dressed the boy with her own hands, placed him in her lap, and kissed him. Then she adorned him with Guru Gobind Singh's sword, shield, bow and arrows. She presented Guru Gobind Singh's steel mace[1] to Kapur Singh. It was to be given to Jassa Singh when he would have won a name in the service of the Panth. The boy's mother was to accompany him. They all returned to the Sikh camp near Kartarpur in the Jalandhar Doab, 15 kms from Jalandhar and 64 kms from Amritsar.

Jassa Singh was administered pahul by Kapur Singh. He was attached to the band of his maternal uncle Bagh Singh with whom the boy's mother went to stay. The first duty assigned to him was of feeding the Sikh horses with fodder and gram (*ghās-dānā*). The Sikhs called him Bhujangi and made fun of his Hindustani dress and speech (*hamko, tumko*) and the low duty he had to perform. He complained to Kapur Singh and wished to be relieved of his menial job. Kapur Singh patted him on the back, advised him to bear the jokes cheerfully, and said that by serving the Panth he would become padshah. The Sikhs began calling him Kalal Shahi.

The Sikhs could not stay at one place for fear of the government and their enemies. They moved from place to place for safety as well as to provide themselves with means of living. From the Jalandhar Doab they went to upper Bari Doab in Gurdaspur district.

[1]Gian Singh in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 605, calls it silver stick. He says it is preserved in Akal Bunga at Amritsar. Latif, *Panjab*, 314, declares it a silver mace.

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Sohan Lal Suri says that Bagh Singh raided a large number of villages and towns and exacted tributes from zamindars. "Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the son of Bagh Singh's sister, a handsome and courageous youth, was his uncle's deputy and exercised full authority over matters and things concerning Bagh Singh."

His first exploit, 1732

The first exploit of Jassa Singh was a good beginning and a foreboding of his future greatness. He was only 13 years old when his uncle Bagh Singh died without an issue, and Jassa Singh took command of Bagh Singh's *jatha.* Shortly afterwards he learnt that a merchant, Murtaza Khan, a dealer in horses, was going to Delhi with a number of *vilayati* (Central Asian) horses. The Sikhs were then lying encamped in the jungle of Kanhakachha, 21 kms south-east from Lahore. Jassa Singh led his band to attack the merchant. Having seized a number of horses, they disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. This adventure gained him prominence. He presented them to Kapur Singh who returned two horses for Jassa Singh's use. When he rode on them wearing Hindustani dress and a turban tied in the fashion of Delhiwalas, the Sikhs shouted. "*Wāh, wāh, sohna ghora, bānkā sowār.*" In the days of persecution of the Sikhs Jassa Singh often took refuge in the jungles of Muktsar.[1] The other Sikhs also were somewhere in its neighbourhood.

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Head of the Dal Khalsa, 1748

During Nadir Shah's invasion, Jassa Singh worked under Nawab Kapur Singh. He joined in building the fort at Dallewal on the eastern bank of river Ravi where the Sikhs had established their headquarters. He delivered numerous attacks on Nadir Shah's rear between Rupar on the Satluj and Jammu. Shortly afterwards the fort of Dallewal was demolished by Zakariya Khan and the Sikhs escaped across the Satluj into Malwa. Jassa Singh established himself in Dogar villages of Firozpur district. The Dogars were a pastoral tribe residing on both sides of the Satluj. Jassa Singh captured Baggoki, Hicharwal and Lakhumalanwala. Later on Jassa Singh seized two parganahs of Dogars, Mallanwala and Makhu. These two

[1]It is a sacred place of the Sikhs and lay in the centre of a waterless desert on the borders of Lakhi Jungle.

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territories remained with Kapurthala until the first Anglo-Sikh war in 1845.

On Zakariya Khan's death the Sikhs began visiting Amritsar in large numbers. He with Kapur Singh was in the band which killed Jaspat Rae. He was present in the Chhota Ghallughara, and escaped the massacre of the Sikhs by Yahiya Khan and Lakhpat Rae. He went to Jaitu, 30 kms from Bhatinda and 60 kms from Firozpur, to recover from his wounds. In 1748 at a grand assemblage of the Sikhs Nawab Kapur Singh named the fighting body of Sikhs the Dal Khalsa, and appointed Jassa Singh Ahluwalia its leader.

In 1753 Kapur Singh fell ill. Realizing that his end was near, he decided to strengthen the position of Jassa Singh, his foster son. In the presence of a large gathering at Amritsar, Kapur Singh handed over to Jassa Singh the steel mace of Guru Gobind Singh. In a stirring speech he declared that he was passing on his prestige, power and influence to Jassa Singh in preference to his own son Khushhal Singh. As a matter of fact he followed the instructions of Mata Sundari in this matter. Jassa Singh was a blooming youth of thirty-five years at this time. The Sikhs began to call him Sultan-ul-Qaum or king of the community. In December, 1753, after the death of Muin-ul-Mulk he established his headquarters at Fatahabad on the right bank of river Beas and set up his thana or military post in the sarae. It was converted into a fort and was called Khalwara. Fatahabad remained his capital upto 1780, when he shifted to Kapurthala.

Joined in the expulsion of Afghans, 1758

In 1757 Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed his son Timur Shah governor of the Panjab. As he was a minor, the Durrani's commander-in-chief, Jahan Khan, managed the state affairs. He was a harsh administrator. He drove away Adina Beg Khan, governor of the Jalandhar Doab, into the hills. He also persecuted Sodhi Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur. Adina Beg planned to retaliate. He won over Jassa Singh Ahluwalia by payment of a heavy tribute and permitting the Sikhs to plunder the Jalandhar Doab. With the help of the Sikhs and Marathas from Delhi he succeeded in expelling Timur Shah and Jahan Khan from the Panjab in April, 1758.

The Dal Khalsa treads down the Panjab

On the retirement of Ahmad Shah Durrani from the Panjab in 1761,

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the Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia attacked Khwajah Mirza Khan, ex-governor of Lahore, then in charge of Chahar Mahal or the four districts of Aurangabad (Jehlam), Gujrat, Sialkot and Pasrur. In July, 1761, Saadat Khan and Sadiq Beg Khan Afridis, the faujdars of the Jalandhar Doab, were defeated. According to eye-witness Tahmas Khan Miskin they "were thrown out like a fly out of milk." Jassa Singh then rushed upon Sarhind, and plundered a part of it. As they were opposed by Nawab of Malerkotla, this town was laid waste.

Baptism of Alha Singh of Patiala, April, 1761

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia maintained cordial relations with Phulkian chiefs. Ahmad Shah Abdali had defeated the Marathas at the third battle of Panipat on 14 January, 1761. He was passing near Patiala on his way back home on 29 March, 1761. Alha Singh was afraid that his country might be ravaged by his army. He waited upon the invader, presented him rich gifts and accepted him as his overlord promising to pay him a tribute of five lakhs of rupees annually.

This action was against the policy of the Dal Khalsa, which under no circumstances was prepared to submit to the invader. The Dal Khalsa decided to punish Alha Singh. Jassa Singh led the Dal towards Patiala. Alha Singh met the Dal a long way from his capital, apologised and offered to pay a fine and serve the Dal with *karahprasad* or consecrated sweet pudding.

Khushwaqt Rae, the famous historian of the Sikhs, completed his manuscript in May, 1811. He was the Diwan of Nihal Singh Atariwala. He says that Alha Singh was not a regular Sikh as he did not keep long hair on head, though he kept a beard which was a common practice then both with Hindus and Muslims. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia administered pahul to him, and admitted him into the Khalsa brotherhood. In order to please Jassa Singh he fixed a certain sum of money on himself to be paid to the Ahluwalia sardar as a token of gratitude for having saved him from the fury of the Dal Khalsa.[1]

Issued the first Sikh coin of Lahore, November, 1761

Khawajah Abed Khan, governor of Lahore, attacked Charat Singh Sukarchakia at Gujranwala in September, 1761. Jassa Singh led the

[1]Khushwaqt Rae, Patiala Ms. no. 800, folio 66 a; Karam Singh, *Jiwan Britant Maharaj Alha Singh*, 209-11; Muhammad Hasan, *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 55-57; *SPD*, XXI. 202.

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Dal to help him. On his approach Abed Khan fled away to Lahore leaving his entire baggage behind.

After the celebration of the Diwali, Jassa Singh directed the Dal Khalsa to attack Lahore in November, 1761. The Khwajah shut himself up in the fort. The leading citizens waited upon Jassa Singh. They offered to admit the Sikhs into the city on a guarantee of safety and security of the inhabitants. Having occupied the city, the Sikhs attacked the fort. Abed Khan was killed in the action, and the fort was also seized by the Sikhs. In the flush of triumph, the Sikhs declared Jassa Singh Padshah and struck coins in his name.

This fact is disputed by some recent writers basing their arguments on the statement of Ganesh Das Vadehra who wrote nearly one hundred years later. He says that these coins were minted by Maulvis of Lahore and sent to the Durrani. Further he places this coin in 1765. But we have the evidence of Ghulam Ali Azad who compiled his work, *Khazana-e-Amira*, eight or nine months after the issuing of this coin. He writes :

"....they raised the standard of rebellion and disturbance, and killed his viceroy at Lahore. They raised a person named Jassa Singh from among themselves to the status of a king, and like the demon, they made him sit on the throne of Jamshid, and blackened the face of the coin with his name. Having taken possession of the city of Lahore and its vicinity, they molested God's creatures in general and the Muslims in particular." (*Khazana-e-Amira*, 114.) Ghulam Ali is supported by *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin* (1782), *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari*, (1787), Khushwaqt Rae (1811), and Ahmad Yadgar (1835). Ganesh Das wrote after annexation of the Panjab in 1849. In view of contemporary evidence, Ganesh Das Vadehra's version does not hold ground.

These coins were not minted by the *mullans* and *maulvis*, but they did send some of them to Ahmad Shah Durrani to incite him to punish the Sikhs as he had done in the case of Marathas. Kartar Singh Kalaswalia in his book *Tegh Khalsa*, p. 266, agrees that these coins were struck by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, but some of these rupees were sent by the mullans to Ahmad Shah Durrani at Kandhar. [For a detailed discussion see my *History of the Sikhs*, II, pp. 173-78.]

Upper-hand of the Durrani in the first half of 1762 and of the Sikhs in the latter half

In January, 1762, Jassa Singh led the Dal Khalsa towards Sarhind

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with a view to conquer it. Sarhind stood in the heart of a non-Muslim region. It was easier to conquer it than Lahore which lay on the borders of a vast Muslim land. The greatest supporter of the governor of Sarhind was the Nawab of Malerkotla. The Sikhs decided to attack Malerkotla first. The Dal Khalsa lay encamped at Kup, 9 kms north of Malerkotla. Like the Hindus, the Sikhs had not yet developed the technique of appointing scouts to keep themselves in touch with the movements of their enemies. They knew nothing about the presence of Ahmad Shah Durrani in the Panjab. They were suddenly attacked by the Shah in conjunction with the chiefs of Sarhind and Malerkotla on the morning of February 5, 1762, when most of the Sikhs lay fast asleep. In the twinkling of an eye they threw themselves on their horses, and commenced marching in a solid square in the direction of jungles and deserts of Barnala, Jakhal and Hisar. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia faced Ahmad Shah Durrani. In the running battle the Sikhs lost about 25,000 persons. This was the shock of arms for the Sikhs. The shock of continuous blows for the Durrani was to follow shortly afterwards.

One year earlier the Durrani had inflicted an equally crushing defeat upon Marathas in third battle of Panipat on January 14, 1761. The Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao had died of the shock, and the Marathas were reeling and staggering under the blast. Ahmad Shah Durrani wanted to see the shock effect of his victory over the Sikhs. For this purpose he stayed at Lahore up to December, 1762.

It was not in the nature of the Sikhs to submit timidly to tyranny. Their savage massacre by the Durrani elevated instead of depressing their spirits. The survivors gathered in a general body at Muktsar near the holy tank and declared that in the ghallughara the alloy had gone and the purified Khalsa remained to carry on the struggle for independence. In three months their wounds had healed. In May, 1762 Jassa Singh forced Zain Khan, governor of Sarhind, to pay a fine of Rs. 50,000. The Sikhs retaliated for the destruction of their holy places by demolishing Muslim tombs and using mosques as stables for their horses shouting, "*Musle da nash, Wah Guru da prakash.*" The eye-witness Tahmas Khan Miskin stated that from July, 1762, onward the whole province fell into a state of confusion and chaos due to the Sikh disturbances.

The Diwali took place on October 17, 1762. The Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh gathered at Amritsar to celebrate this festival. Ahmad Shah attacked them, but he was repulsed and forced to flee to Lahore

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in the night. Later on the Shah pursued the Sikhs in the Lakhi Jungle. A small body of the Sikhs attacked him. One Sikh galloped his horse on the Shah who shot him dead. On December, 12, 1762, the Shah was crossing river Ravi at Lahore by a bridge of boats on his way back to Afghanistan. The Sikhs attacked him from such close quarters that "he wondered at their boldness and looked at them in a surprised manner."

At Anandpur, March, 1763

In March, 1763, Jassa Singh accompanied the Dal Khalsa to Anandpur[1] to celebrate the Hola. Some Sikhs complained to Jassa Singh that Gole Khan Rajput of Kathgarh and the zamindars of Shankargarh maltreated the Sikh inhabitants of those places. Jassa Singh led an expedition against them and established Sikh thanas or military posts at Kathgarh and Balachaur to keep the refractory people in check. He then realized tribute for the Dal Khalsa from the neighbouring rajas of Bilaspur and Nalagarh. While returning to Fatahabad he seized Kot Isā Khan from Qadir Bakhsh.

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Conquest of Sarhind, 14 January, 1764

The Sikhs were determined to conquer Sarhind. In January, 1764, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia marched upon Sarhind. Jassa Singh commanded 10,000 horsermen of his own misl. As head of the Dal Khalsa he had under him seven misls, six misls of the Budha Dal and the Bhangi misl of the Taruna Dal. Alha Singh of Patiala also joined them as Sarhind was situated only 37 kms north of his capital and he desired to possess it. The battle was fought with Zain Khan near Isru. Zain Khan was wounded. He fled away on horseback and entered a mango grove to hide himself. His head struck against a thick branch of a tree, and he fell down. A Sikh was pursuing him. He cut off his head, and took it to Jassa Singh. The town was thoroughly squeezed without any distinction. Ratan Singh Bhangu in his *Panth Prakash* on page 269 writes: "*Liye Hindwan ke jewar utār.*"

The province of Sarhind was divided among seven misls and Phulkian states. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia seized a group of 24 villages in Ludhiana district. Of the 24 villages eight were retained under his own

[1]A nephew of Guru Tegh Bahadur had four sons, Udai Singh, Khem Singh, Nahar Singh and Chuhar Singh. From them are descended the Sodhis of Anandpur, Mahowal, Chakmkaur and Machhiwara. They are known as Bari Sarkar, Dusri, Tisri and Chauthi Sarkar respectively.

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control. Twelve villages were given to Bundalia Sikhs of his own misl. Four villages were granted to the Sikhs of Rurki also belonging to his misl.

At Naraingarh, January, 1764

From Sarhind Jassa Singh went to Naraingarh, 85 kms away. Bulaqi Mal, Diwan of Raja Kirat Prakash of Nahan, 30 kms distant, presented Jassa Singh, on behalf of his master, with a horse and a sum of Rs. 10,000 as a *nazar*. The parganah of Bharog about 10 kms east of Ambala cantonment (57 villages), and the parganah of Naraingarh, 25 kms farther east (46 villages) were held by Muhammad Baqar, the Mir of Garhi Kotaha, 14 kms from Naraingarh on the road to Chandigarh. The Mir offered Jassa Singh an elephant and a couple of thousand rupees. Rae Hoshiar Singh of Rani ka Raepur, 2 kms from Garhi Kotaha, gave him a horse and Rs. 1,000. Gharib Das of Manimajra near Chandigarh paid him a nazar of Rs. 25,000. The Raja of Garhwal came from Srinagar and paid him homage.

Murar Singh,[1] jagirdar of Sultanwinds, was a servant of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and his two uncles, Dasaundha Singh and Hakumat Singh were horsemen. Jassa Singh appointed Hakumat Singh as his thanadar at Garhi Kotaha with 150 horse and 50 foot, Dasaundha Singh at Naraingarh and Murar Singh at Bharog. Later on Jassa Singh married his elder daughter to Murar Singh and declared him as his deputy. He was provided with a contingent of 1500 horse and 500 foot to maintain peace and order in the country.

Dasaundha Singh was a tyrant. The people were opposed to him. They invited help from the neighbouring Raja of Nahan. Kanwar Kishan Singh, a relative of the Raja of Nahan, seized Naraingarh after the death of Jassa Singh. Dasaundha Singh fled away to Bharog. On Murar Singh's death his son Jawahir Singh retained possession of this parganah. He was killed while fighting. His son Mahan Singh was a child. The administration was carried on by Rae Singh and Dasaundha Singh. They were cruel and corrupt, and the people were unhappy.

Alha Singh seized his eight villages, 1764

Jassa Singh returned from Naraingarh to Fatahabad. He learnt

[1]Murar Singh is wrongly called Mirza Singh.

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that his eight villages of Bhagu Majra, Bhukri, Dadu Majra, Khanpur, Orijlan, Pirsuhana, Simbal Majra and Suhoran had been seized by Alha Singh of Patiala.

In the Ganga Doab and Rohilkhand, 1764

In February, 1764, Jassa Singh, on hearing the reports of ill-treatment of the Hindus by the Muslims, led a strong body of the Dal Khalsa into the upper Ganga Doab. They plundered Saharanpur (February, 20, 1764), Shamli, Kandhla, Ambli, Miranpur, Deoband, Muzaffarnagar, Jawalapur, Kankhal, Landhaurah, Najibabad, Nagina, Moradabad, Chandausi, Anupshahar and Garhmukteshar. This region belonged to Najib-ud-daulah, the Dictator of Delhi, from 1761 to 1770. He issued out of Delhi to punish the Sikhs. Tahmas Khan Miskin who fought with the Sikhs in these campaigns in the army of Najib-ud-daulah, writes:

"In that year 40,000 of their horsemen crossed the Jamuna and disturbed and looted the Saharanpur and Meerut districts. Nawab Najib Khan, for a month or two, moved in every direction where the Sikhs were reported to be roving, in order to protect the country, and fought and usually defeated them. As they did not make a firm stand anywhere to offer battle, he had to run back after them, but they did not give up their jackal tricks." Najib-ud-daulah made peace with the Sikhs by offering them a bribe of eleven lakhs of rupees.

Ahmad Shah Durrani had destroyed the sacred buildings and the holy tank at Amritsar. The Sikh sardars had brought immense riches from Ganga Doab and Rohilkhand in February-March, 1764. Jassa Singh collected one-tenth of their booty for rebuilding Amritsar. He entrusted this work first to Sahib Rae Chaudhri and later on to Bhai Des Raj. Jassa Singh himself stayed at Amritsar for most of the time for four years until the buildings were completed at a cost of 14 lakhs. He had already built a Katra or residential quarters there in 1759 known as Katra Ahluwalian.

Opposition to Ahmad Shah Durrani, 1764-65

In the winter of 1764 Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the seventh time. The Sikhs followed him in the rear delivering guerilla attacks. The invader came to a halt at Kunjpura, an Afghan colony, 130 kms north of Delhi. He was shocked to see whatever he had plundered was seized by the Sikhs. He gave up the plan of advancing to Delhi on a fruitless campaign as he would be deprived of his

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booty by the Sikhs. He returned homeward, and crossed the river Satluj at Machhiwara. On the western side of the river his passage was blocked by the Sikhs. Qazi Nur Muhammad, present in the Durrani camp, says:

"In the centre was Jassa Kalal, who fearlessly stood like a mountain." The Durrani reached Beas about 100 kms distant in seven days. He was attacked by the Sikhs everyday for a couple of hours regularly without any break. In view of the approaching Baisakhi festival they did not pursue the invader beyond river Beas. The Durrani was also so much afraid of the Sikh attacks that he did not stay at Lahore, and hastily pushed on.

Favour shown to Alha Singh, 1765

In March, 1765, Alha Singh purchased the title of Raja from Ahmad Shah Durrani by offering him rich presents and three and a half lakhs of rupees in cash. The Dal Khalsa wanted to punish him. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was not in favour of any action as he himself was clandestinely inclined towards the Shah. Hari Singh Bhangi, leader of the Taruna Dal, attacked Alha Singh at village Langhhalaele. The Budha Dal under Jassa Singh did not join him. In the battle Hari Singh was killed. Out of gratitude Alha Singh got his grandson, Amar Singh, the crown prince, administered pahul by Jassa Singh at village Dainakhalana. Alha Singh constructed a well there in memory of this event. On the death of Alha Singh in 1765, Amar Singh succeeded him. The Raja had been baptised by Jassa Singh. Baptism was always a bond of affection and regard among the Sikhs. Amar Singh requested Jassa Singh to attend his coronation as chief guest and adorn him with the paraphernalia of royalty. This task he cheerfully performed and received the parganah of Isru as a nazar. This parganah remained with Kapurthala up to the first Anglo-Sikh war and reverted to Patiala in 1846.

The hill states made tributary

Adina Beg Khan, the viceroy of the Panjab, died in September, 1758. The Kangra hills and Jammu were tributary to him. In October, 1759, Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra governor of the Jalandhar Doab and the hill country lying between the Ravi and the Satluj. Ahmad Shah encamped at Aligarh and got busy in making preparations against Marathas. Jassa Singh defeated Ghamand Chand in the battle of Mahilpur near

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Hoshiarpur, and forced him to pay tribute to the Dal Khalsa. He then sent a small contingent into the hills and realized nominal tribute from Kangra hill states including Mandi and Kulu. Bilaspur and Nalagarh had been made tributary in March, 1763.

Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu was a tributary to Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1765 when the Durrani was returning to Afghanistan, Ranjit Dev paid his tribute to him. In this invasion the Sikhs had the upper hand. They deeply resented Ranjit Dev's action. A section of the Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia marched upon Jammu. A sum of three lakhs and seventy-five thousand rupees was realized from Ranjit Dev by way of fine, and he was made tributary to the Dal Khalsa. The Jammu rupee was called Chilki rupee and was worth about sixty paise of the present day.

In the last Durrani invasion, 1766-67

Ahmad Shah Durrani entered the Panjab for the last time in the winter of 1766. During this campaign he was constantly harassed by the Sikhs. Ahmad Shah wrote letters to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and other sardars that they should come and make peace with him. The suggestion was rejected. Ahmad Shah returned home from Ismailabad, 32 kms south of Ambala.

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Administered pahul to Gajpat Singh of Jind, 1767

Gajpat Singh of Jind had fallen into arrears of his tribute to the Delhi Government. He was seized and taken to Delhi. He was converted to Islam and was circumcised. On his release in 1767, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia reconverted him to Sikhism by administering pahul again and publicly eating with him from the same dish.[1]

Jalandhar given to Khushhal Singh, 1772

In 1769 Jassa Singh captured Jalandhar and its neighbouring territory in collaboration with Khushhal Singh Singhpuria. He kept Jalandhar with himself and gave the neighbouring villages to Khushhal Singh. After a couple of years, out of regard for his patron Nawab Kapur Singh, he entrusted Jalandhar also to Khushhal Singh who established his headquarters there.

Enmity with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia

The Dal Khalsa was divided into two bodies, Budha Dal and

[1]Khushwaqt Rae, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Ms. 800, folios 66a, 120a; M. 420, p. 288.

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Taruna Dal. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the head of the entire Dal Khalsa. He was also the head of the Budha Dal including his own misl. The Taruna Dal had its own commander in Hari Singh Bhangi. He considered Jassa Singh in peace times chief of the Budha Dal only. On the death of Hari Singh in 1765, the leadership of the Taruna Dal passed on to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. The two chiefs fully co-operated against Ahmad Shah Durrani, but at other times they were opposed to each other.

Once in 1775 the Ahluwalia Sardar was going to Achal near Batala to attend a fair. Mali Singh Ramgarhia, brother of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, at the head of a contingent was going from Sri Hargobindpur to Batala. On the way the two groups came to blows. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was struck by a bullet and he fell off his horse. Mali Singh put him in a litter and carried him to Batala, their headquarters. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia sincerely apologised. During his two days' stay at Batala the Ahluwalia Sardar ate or drank nothing, talked to none, and remained absolutely silent. On the third day the Ramgarhia chief sent him to Fatahabad with all honours and under proper escort.

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Jassa Singh Ahluwalia vowed vengeance, and resolved to get Ramgarhias out of the Panjab. He besieged the Ramgarhia town of Zahura, situated on the banks of river Beas. While fighting Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was wounded by a gunshot. He retired to a place of safety, and the place fell into the hands of Ahluwalias. Jassa Singh gave it to Baghel Singh Karorasinghia to win him over to his side. He then organised a confederacy with Kanhiyas and Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. They defeated Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and expelled him from the Panjab in 1778.

Relations with Bhangis

In the beginning Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was opposed to Bhangi sardars. The reason was that Hari Singh Bhangi, leader of the Taruna Dal, acknowledged Jassa Singh Ahluwalia chief of the Dal Khalsa when both the Dals were united for a joint action. At other times he considered Jassa Singh as leader of the Budha Dal only. The bitterness continued even after the death of Hari Singh in 1765, because his sons Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh also held the same view as their father. In 1774 Jhanda Singh was killed by Jai Singh Kanhiya's hired assassin. Then fighting broke out between Bhangis and Kanhiyas over the Pathankot affair. In the battle of Dinanagar in

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1774 between them Jassa Singh Ahluwalia supported Kanhiyas. The other great leader of the Bhangis, Ganda Singh, lost his life in this battle. This event made Jai Singh Kanhiya very powerful. In order to maintain the balance of power, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia got Raja Amar Singh's son, Sahib Singh, betrothed to the daughter of Ganda Singh Bhangi. Further, he engaged the daughter of his cousin Bhag Singh Ahluwalia to Gujar Singh Bhangi's eldest son Sukha Singh, one of the triumvirate of Lahore. This marriage took place in 1779. Jassa Singh presented to the bridegroom an elephant furnished with complete trappings and adorned with jewellery. Thus against Jai Singh Kanhiya's domination of two misls, Kanhiya and Sukarchakia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia created a combination of other three powers Ahluwalia, Bhangis and the Patiala state.

Helped Amar Singh of Patiala, 1779

Abdul Ahad a minister of the Mughal empire, invaded Patiala in September, 1779. He demanded a heavy tribute from Maharaja Amar Singh. He invited help from Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who at once responded to his call. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, his collaborator Khushhal Singh Singhpuria and Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia whose son was married to a Patiala princess, came to his rescue. The minister was frightened and retired.

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Occupation of Kapurthala, December, 1779

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had his headquarters at Fatahabad on the right bank of the Beas. Kapurthala tract running in a narrow strip along the left bank of the Beas to its confluence with the Satluj was under Rae Ibrahim Bhatti. He was a tributary to the Ahluwalia sardar. The annual tribute amounted to one lakh. For some time the tribute had remained in arrears. The Bhatti chief was spending money on constructing thirteen forts around the town. Jassa Singh summoned Rae Ibrahim to Fatahabad. He deputed his two officials, Shah Chiragh and Sahaj Ram Diwan. Jassa Singh demanded immediate payment of four lakhs of rupees, being the full amount of arrears. The Rae failed in compliance.

Ibrahim had built a fort called Rae-ka-kot, in the midst of colonies of Afghans near Vairowal to the west of river Beas. Murar Singh and Shaikh Karimullah were ordered to capture Rae-ka-kot in 1770. This was done. Chait Singh was appointed thanadar of the place.

Rae Ibrahim did not pay any money afterwards. In 1773,

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Sultanpur, the seat of government of Ibrahim was invaded by Jassa Singh. Kanwars Mohar Singh and Bhag Singh took the leading part in the attack. After some resistance the Nawab gave in and sued for peace. Kapurthala with 27 villages was left with Rae Ibrahim for an annual tribute. The rest of the country was annexed. It was placed under the charge of Kanwar Bhag Singh.

In 1777 Jassa Singh's son-in-law, Mohar Singh, a jagirdar of Fatahabad, married to his younger daughter, was shot dead from one of the thirteen forts near Kapurthala. This was intolerable. Ibrahim pleaded his innocence, and apologised for the mistake of somebody in his service. Jassa Singh demanded the surrender of the culprit, who was not traced. The subject people of the Rae complained against his harsh policy. Eventually. Jassa Singh made up his mind to take possession of Kapurthala.

In December, 1779, Jassa Singh marched upon Kapurthala via Vairowal. After some fighting Rae Ibrahim took up his position in the main fort. Jassa Singh encamped at village Shaikhpur. Kanwar Bhag Singh captured Andresa, Badalpur, Bholath, Bholian, Bohdalel, Brahmwal, Chakoke, Dainwind, Dala, Dhaliwal, Dhilwan, Hamira, Karael, Khakhrain, Kulārān, Lakhanki, Lohian, Mullanwala, Nadālā, Parveznagar, Ramidi, Sidhwān, and Wadālā.

Rae Ibrahim sued for peace. He sent Ali Asghar with a horse as a present. Ibrahim's officials Diwan Lahori Mal and Bora Mal called upon Jassa Singh to settle terms. They were ordered to vacate Kapurthala. Rae Ibrahim was allowed to leave in safety with his movable property and family. He was given a place to live and a fixed allowance for his expenses was granted. Kapurthala became the headquarters of Kanwar Bhag Singh, a cousin of Jassa Singh as well as the capital of Ahluwalia Misl. Jassa Singh continued to live at Fatahabad.

The Sodhis of Kartarpur, 1780

The Sodhis of Kartarpur had descended from Dhirmal, a grandson of Guru Hargobind. He had poisoned to death the Guru because he was not nominated his successor. The Sikhs had boycotted the Sodhis of Kartarpur and neither ate nor drank anything from their hands. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had earlier re-admitted Gajpat Singh of Jind to Sikhism and had eaten with him from the same dish. The Sodhis of Kartarpur requested him to admit them into the Sikh faith by publicly eating with them. Jassa Singh was busy in consoli-

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dating his authority at Kapurthala. He deputed Bhag Singh to go to Kartarpur together with a number of prominent Sikhs. They ate with the Sodhis from the same plates and admitted them into the Sikh faith.

Deputed a Vakil to the Mughal Court at Delhi, 1780

Amar Singh of Patiala and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia decided to win the favour of the Delhi Wazir Najaf Khan. A newsletter of the Mughal Court (Akhbar-e-Durbar-e-Mualla) recorded that the Vakil of Raja Jassa Singh of Kapurthala attended the court on 12 February, 1780. He was granted a doshala, while a sanad of jagir was issued for his master under the seal of Zahur-un-Nisa Begam.

Ravaged Patiala territory, 1781

Mirza Shafi, an imperial general of Delhi, led a campaign against the Sikh chiefs of the Budha Dal who had settled in Karnal and Ambala districts. He invited Raja Amar Singh of Patiala to join him. Following the traditional policy of his house, Amar Singh immediately responded to his call. On 17 March, 1781, Chain Singh, the Patiala Vakil, waited upon Shafi. He was granted a doshala, a *goshwara* and a jewelled ornament for the turban. A *khilat* of five pieces was handed over to him for Raja Amar Singh. He was dismissed with an order to bring money and reinforcements for the Mirza.

On 25 March, 1781, Chain Singh's letter was received by Shafi. It stated that Raja Amar Singh's troops had left Patiala and were marching towards Ambala. But these troops were not allowed by the Majha sardars to join him. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia invaded the Patiala territory on 28 March. Tara Singh Ghaiba had intercepted the progress of Patiala troops. A few other sardars had reached Ambala to stop them from advancing. Jassa Singh and other Sikhs continued to plunder Patiala territory. The vakil of Amar Singh heavily bribed Jassa Singh and others. Thereupon they retired towards Malerkotla and then to Khanna. Amar Singh had agreed to meet them there to settle terms of peace.

In 1782 Jassa Singh Ahluwalia attended the marriage party of Raja Sahib Singh with the daughter of Ganda Singh Bhangi. He joined the *barāt* at Kapurthala. At the gurdwara of Taran Taran he administered pahul to Sahib Singh. The marriage took place at Panjwar. On the return journey he gave rich presents to Sahib Singh.

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Favour shown to Ranjit Singh Ramgarhia, January, 1783

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had allowed some Ramgarhia families to live at Lekhpur. In the beginning of 1783, Chuhar Mal, the chief of Phagwara, Baghel Singh and Kakars assembled their troops near Lekhpur with a view to expel the Ramgarhia families. Ranjit Singh, head of the families, sought help from Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. He immediately sent a word to Baghel Singh to retire from Lekhpur. Kanwar Bhag Singh was deputed to see that the Lekhpur tract was safely evacuated. He encamped at Khajwāla and made the invaders retire.

In the Red Fort, Delhi, March, 1783

The Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia advanced upon Delhi in March, 1783. By this time Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had also built up his fortunes in the Hansi-Hisar region. He joined the Dal Khalsa in the neighbourhood of Delhi. The Dal entered the Red Fort on March 11, 1783, and placed Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the throne of Mughal Emperors. They called him Badshah Singh. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia challenged him. Both sides drew out swords. The Ahluwalia sardar stepped down the throne and declined the honour. But he could not bear this insult and humiliation. It told upon his health which declined rapidly.

Correspondence with the English, April, 1783

James Browne was an agent of Warren Hastings, the governor-general. He first lived at Agra and then came to Delhi. His main object was to see that Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, should not surrender himself to the Sikhs. From Agra Browne wrote to Baghel Singh who was then controlling the imperial capital. His vakil Lakhpat Rae posted at the Emperor's court, informed Browne that notable Sikh chiefs such as Jassa Singh Ahluwalia "who is the highest and greatest and in that country called Badshah Singh" and Baghel Singh including many others were willing to establish friendly relations with the British Government.

Browne's reply dated 27 April, 1783, held out prospects of "sincere friendship" on the condition of their not plundering the Ganga Doab and the crownlands.

Lakhpat Rae sent another letter enclosing with it letters from Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Lahna Singh Bhangi of Lahore, Baghel Singh from Delhi and Sahib Singh of Patiala. They contained declarations

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of mutual goodwill and co-operation.

About the conduct of these messengers Browne wrote : "I have conversed with several Sicks, who were sent to me by different chiefs on complimentary messages, and I perceived a manly boldness in their manner and conversation, very unlike the other inhabitants of Hindostan, owing no doubt to the freedom of their government."

His death, 17 October, 1783

In October, 1783, Jassa Singh decided to attend the Diwali at Amritsar. On his way at Bandala he ate a watermelon. It gave him colic pain which was unbearable. He realized that his end was near. The *pandits*, *prohits* and other saintly persons were presented with horses, land and costly gifts. The *Granthis* recited Sukhmani. After some time he expired. According to his will his body was taken in a palanquin to Amritsar where he was cremated near Baba Atal. His death took place on 7 Kartik 1840 Samvat Bikrami.[1]

Firman of Delhi Emperor

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia obtained a firman from Alamgir II (1754-1759) dated 7 Ramzān, 1171 Hijri (15 May, 1758).

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It reads:

"Firman Aziz-ud-din Alamgir Sani ibn Muaz-ud-din Jahandar Shah Badshah, Delhi.

"Jassa Singh! Your petition has been seen. The parganahs Patti, Haibatpur, Fatahabad, Watala, Satiala, Kot Mahtab, Sahyarah are confirmed upon you as revenue free. Take tribute from jagirdars of Kamrah, Kari, Kotlah.

"It is not proper for Hari Singh to create disturbances in the country. He should stop oppressing the people.

"Nawab Zain-ud-din Khan (the Durrani Governor of Sarhind) should attend the court to get himself confirmed.

"Dated seventh of Ramzan, 1171 Hijri, the regnal year 4." (Ramjas, 66-67).

Firman of Ahmad Shah Durrani

"Raja Jassa Singh !

"The Rajas of your side are engaged in creating disturbances.

[1]The news of the death of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was received by Zabita Khan at Ghausgarh in Muzaffarnagar district on November 4, 1783.

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Fifty-two villages of taluqa Fatahabad being an old jagir are granted. Compensation in the form of elephants and goods from Miranpur, Jansath, on the other side of the river and from parganah Tihara in the Sarhind province are also granted. The Rajas of that country had been traditionally faithful. They should remain obedient like Raja Amar Singh Phul. The boundary of his state extends to Pakpattan across the river. It is not proper for you to be at differences with one another. It is incumbent upon you, Raja Amar Singh and Raja Abhai Chand Katoch to be obedient to Nawab Zain-ud-din Khan. We are sending our true well-wisher Muhammad Husain Khan to your side. On the receipt of our firman you should remain firm in obedience to us. This would result in peace and good administration. Avoid enmity and warfare. Never indulge in short-sighted deeds. It will serve as a warning to others.

"Dated 23 Ramzan, 1174 Hijri" (28 April, 1761).

(Ramjas, 68-69)

Comment

These two documents cannot be fake or forged, because they are included in a manuscript written by a high official of Kapurthala State who had access to all the confidential papers preserved in the State *toshakhana.*

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the head of the Dal Khalsa which was an avowed enemy of submission to both the Mughal Emperors and the Durrani kings. The Phulkian chiefs publicly confessed obedience to both the Governments. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia maintained closest relations with Patiala, and secretly not only approved of their submission, subordination and subservience, but himself also succumbed to it.

They show that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia applied for confirmation of the parganahs mentioned therein.

The first firman indicates that Jassa Singh complained to the Mughal Emperor against Hari Singh Bhangi whom he considered his rival and antagonist.

It is clear that while the policy of Patiala towards Delhi and Kandhar was open and sincere, that of Ahluwalia was deceptive and secretive.

Jassa Singh's character and achievements

It is a marvel that an orphan at the age of four who started life as

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a menial attendant to feed horses with grass and grain, rose to be the military and political head of the Sikhs and the founder of a great state. He had the great privilege of conquering Lahore and issuing his own coin. He also had the unique honour of sitting on the throne of Mughal Emperors in the Red Fort at Delhi. He fought a number of times face to face with Ahmad Shah Durrani, the greatest Asian general of his days. The invader tried hard to win him over in vain. The Maharajas of Patiala and Jind stood before him in all reverence and humility. The Rajas of Nalagarh, Bilaspur, Kangra hills and Jammu touched his knees. The Nawabs of Malerkotla and Kunjpura paid him homage. And yet he remained a humble and docile disciple of Guru Gobind Singh. In the person of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the Guru actually made a sparrow kill hawks.

Jassa Singh was a great warrior, mighty general and eminent organiser. He bore thirty-two scars of sword cuts and bullet marks on the front part of his body and none on his back. He was a giant in body. His breakfast consisted of one kilogram of flour, one half kilogram of butter, one quarter kilogram of crystalline sugar slabs (*misri*), and one bucketful of butter-milk (lassi). One he-goat sufficed him for two meals. Qazi Nur Muhammad who saw him fighting against Ahmad Shah Durrani called him a mountain. These were the days of physical prowess, and only men possessed of indomitable will power could compete with ferocious Afghans on a better footing. He was wheatish in colour, tall, fat, with a broad forehead, wide chest, loud and sonorous voice which could be clearly heard by an assemblage of 50,000 men. One may think that he had a mike hidden in his throat. The horses under him must have been of the size of an elephant. That is why he could be seen clearly by Qazi Nur Muhammad in a body of fifty or sixty thousand men. His long arms came down to his knees. This enabled him to strike his sword right and left with equal vigour.

Jassa Singh was not an enemy of Islam or Muslims. He was opposed only to foreign rule based upon religious bigotry and fanaticism. He was pleased to see a Muslim saying his prayer and expressed his appreciation. He employed hundreds of Muslims as *farash, mir-e-shikar*, syce, etc. Many Muslims served in his civil administration. As Akalis did not tolerate loud call for Muslim prayers (*bāng*), it was forbidden. *Nimaz, roza* and celebration of Muslim festivals were permitted. Cow slaughter was strictly for-

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bidden. He had no scruples against the Muslim leather bucket (*boki* or *boka*) and leather sack (*mashak*). *Boki* was called *Ramdol* (God's vessel). His *langar* ran day and night for everybody, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian. *Sukha* (intoxicating drink), *sardai* (sweet and cold mildly intoxicating drink) and opium were supplied free.

Jassa Singh bathed and prayed daily before sunrise. He conducted the state business in the afternoon at a durbar. A personal *gurmata* could be held at the end of it whenever necessary. In the evening half an hour before and after sunset he listened to the singing of hymns from the Adi Granth, and himself joined in the chorus. Griffin says he "was a Sikh by honest conviction." A visitor was immediately called in without any consideration of time. His ways and manners were of *Gurughar* and of *Dilliwalas*, soft, silky and sweet. In the days of famines which occurred many times he started numerous free messes for the poor and needy.

He was lucky in having many advantages. He was like a son to Mata Sundari, religious head of the Sikhs. He possessed some of the weapons of Guru Gobind Singh which gave him prominence over all other Sikhs. He was the foster son of Nawab Kapur Singh, the political and military head of the Khalsa. The Sikhs called him Sultan-ul-Qaum or Badshah Singh. He played a leading role in consolidating the Sikh power during their most critical period. He converted his community Kalal into a greatly respectable people who have immortalized him by adopting half of his surname.

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Bhag Singh Ahluwalia

A son was born to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in 1747, but he died some time afterwards. He had two daughters. One was married to Mohar Singh of Fatahabad and the other to Murar Singh of Sultanwind. He had no brother. A daughter or a daughter's son could not become a legal heir in those days. He was succeeded by his second cousin Bhag Singh, son of Ladha Singh, born in 1747. Great enmity had existed between Ahluwalias and Ramgarhias. Bhag Singh formed a friendly alliance with Ramgarhia's foe Jai Singh Kanhiya. Jai Singh had differences with Mahan Singh Sukarchakia also. Jai Singh planned to annoy Mahan Singh by attacking his allies Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh of the Nakai Misl. Bhag Singh joined Jai Singh in this affair.

Chamkaur where Guru Gobind Singh had lost his two elder sons in fighting against Mughals was occupied by Nahar Singh Sodhi related to the Guru. Hari Singh Dallewalia lived in his neighbourhood at

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Rupar and Sialba. He expelled the Sodhis from Chamkaur. Bhag Singh helped the Sodhis and he compelled Hari Singh to evacuate Chamkaur and restored the Sodhis in its possession.

In 1785 a battle was fought between Bhangis and Mahan Singh Sukarchakia in the city of Amritsar. Mahan Singh was hard-pressed and wanted to escape, but all exits had been blocked. Bhag Singh gave him passage through his own Katra. The Bhangis pursued Mahan Singh up to Majitha, 20 kms away. Bhag Singh sent his own troops after the Bhangis and thus saved Mahan Singh. The same year Bhag Singh did not obstruct Jassa Singh Ramgarhia from passing across his territory and in recovering his lost country.

In 1789 Bhag Singh helped Kanhiyas in recovering Batala from Ramgarhias. Man Chand, youngest brother of Raja Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra, had come to help Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Bhag Singh intercepted him and put him to flight.

Bhag Singh went on a pilgrimage to Jawalamukhi in 1792. Raja Sansar Chand Katoch met him there. Both the chiefs exchanged turbans as a token of brotherhood. In order to establish lasting friendship between the two families their sons, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and Anurodh Chand also exchanged turbans.

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On the death of Jai Singh Kanhiya in 1793, Sada Kaur, widow of his son Gurbakhsh Singh, had seized the headship of the Kanhiya misl. She wanted to revenge herself upon Jassa Singh Ramgarhia for the death of her husband. She was supported by her son-in-law Ranjit Singh and Bhag Singh Ahluwalia. The three misls in combination besieged Jassa Singh Ramgarhia in the fort of Miani on the banks of river Beas. The siege failed owing to a sudden flood in the river. In 1798 Bhag Singh despatched his general Hamir Singh to attack Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, but he was repulsed and forced to retire. In 1801 Bhag Singh attacked Jodh Singh, son of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, at Phagwara. In the battle Bhag Singh fell down from his horse and passed away.

Khushwaqt Rae who came into contact with Bhag Singh speaks highly of him. He was virtuous, good-natured, well-mannered, patient, forbearing and liberal-minded. He gave a great deal in charity. Every day he listened to the Granth and Hindu shastras. He was not a slave to wine, women and wealth. Griffin calls him "a man of very slight calibre."

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Fatch Singh Ahluwalia

Fatah Singh, the only son of Bhag Singh, born in 1784, succeeded to the headship of the Misl in 1801. As his father was killed at Phagwara, he seized Phagwara and Banga from Chaudhri Chuhar Mal. He was a young man of peaceful temperament, and yielding nature. He remained ontent with his own dominions.

By this time Ranjit Singh Sukarchakia had become the most powerful Sikh sardar in the Panjab. He was also the most ambitious person. He planned to wipe out completely the small Sikh sardars, to use the big ones in his service and eventually to roll them on the ground. Among the big sardars he thought first of all of Fatah Singh Ahluwalia. Ranjit Singh had shown by word and deed that he was a true friend of the Muslims. Chaudhri Qadir Bakhsh, a prominent courtier at the Ahluwalia court persuaded Fatah Singh Ahluwalia to make friends with Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh and Fatah Singh were both young men, though the latter was four years younger than the former. Both exchanged turbans as a token of brotherhood, and took an oath on the holy Granth to preserve lasting brotherhood. This took place in 1801.

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The British were then busy in destroying the Maratha power. In 1805 Jaswant Rao Holkar having been defeated fled to the Panjab to obtain Sikh help. He was closely pursued by Lord Lake. Jaswant Rao Holkar halted at Amritsar. Lord Lake encamped on the western bank of the Beas. Ranjit Singh deputed Fatah Singh to arrange a peace treaty between Holkar and the British. This duty was performed most successfully. As a mark of appreciation Lord Lake presented Fatah Singh with a leopard and Fatah Singh gave the general a hawk.

Fatah Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh during his first expedition to the Cis-Satluj region in 1806. In the second expedition in 1807 Fatah Singh again followed the Maharaja. He requested Ranjit Singh to recover his territory of Naraingarh. General Mohkam Chand invested the fort of Naraingarh. Kanwar Kishan Singh of Nahan who held it offered tough resistance. The Maharaja personally conducted the siege. Ranjit Singh's notable commander, Fatah Singh Kalianwala, was killed while fighting. Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia was seriously wounded and he died on his way back. Another brave soldier, a favourite of Ranjit Singh, who lost his life in this campaign was Ram Singh. The fort fell after a three weeks' hard battle. Kanwar Kishan Singh escaped into the hills. The estate of Naraingarh fetched an annual

income of Rs. 12,580. Fatah Singh was also given three villages of Jitmal Singh of Rani Ka Raepur worth Rs. 1200 a year. Three more villages of the same chief in the parganah of Ghungrana to the value of Rs. 2,255, were given to Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. He subdued the powerful Ranghars of Laha, Bhurewala, Panjlasa and Chechi-majra, and constructed a fort at Laha, the ruins of which are visible even today. Ranjit Singh also recovered for Fatah Singh his eight villages from the Raja of Patiala. He seized the entire territory of Raekian and granted Raekot and Jagraon[1] to Fatah Singh worth Rs. 1,76,000 annually. Fatah Singh was present at the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar on April 25, 1809.

Fatah Singh joined Ranjit Singh in his Kangra expedition. In 1811 he followed in Ranjit Singh's camp to meet Shah Mahmud of Kabul at Rawalpindi. In October, 1811, Ranjit Singh sent Fatah Singh and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia with Diwan Mohkam Chand for seizing the territories of Faizullahpuria also called Singhpuria misl in the Jalandhar Doab. Budh Singh Singhpuria took refuge in the British territory across river Satluj. On July 13, 1813, Fatah Singh fought in the battle of Haidru on the banks of river Indus near Attock against Fatah Khan, the Kabul Wazir, who was badly beaten and driven away. Fatah Singh participated in the campaigns against Bhimbar, Rajauri. Bahawalpur, Multan and Mankerah. As a matter of fact the Ahluwalia chief contributed a contingent in every campaign at his own expense. and often under his personal command.

Ranjit Singh had established lasting friendship on the holy Granth with Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, another big Sikh sardar. Jodh Singh had served Ranjit Singh most faithfully. The Maharaja kept the oath during Jodh Singh's lifetime. On his death in 1816 Ranjit Singh taking Fatah Singh with him seized all the Ramgarhia estates. Fatah Singh was so much shocked that he rejected Ranjit Singh's offer to have a share in the booty. He was frightened of Ranjit Singh's policy of absorption without any scruples.

In 1825 Fatah Singh began to build a summer house for himself one kilometre away from Kapurthala. It had massive walls so that the summer heat could not penetrate through them. In the centre of the building there was an underground cell about eight metres deep below the surface so that it could remain always cool. Those were the days of *tahkhanas* also called *thikana*. It had been roofed and

[1]Jagraon is a corrupted form of Chak Rao.

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only doors and windows remained to be fitted[1]. It was reported to Ranjit Singh that Fatah Singh was building a fort. The Maharaja immediately summoned Fatah Singh to Lahore. Fatah Singh had seen with his own eyes the fate of many chiefs who had been called to Lahore or his camps by Ranjit Singh. He delayed compliance. In December, 1825, the Maharaja sent two battalions under Anand Ram Pindari to Kapurthala. Fatah Singh was terrified. On December 27, 1825, he fled to his possession of Jagraon in British territory. The Maharaja deputed Faqir Aziz-ud-din to annex the Kapurthala state and settle its administration. Anand Ram Pindari was ordered to demolish all the forts.

Survival of the State

Fatah Singh sought a British guarantee for his trans-Satluj possessions. The Governor-General affirmed Fatah Singh's possession of the villages situated in the Cis-Satluj region, but he declined to interfere with his trans-Satluj territory. The Agent Governor-General at Ludhiana addressed a letter to Ranjit Singh, suggesting not to confiscate the Kapurthala state in the Jalandhar Doab. Ranjit Singh recalled his men and invited Fatah Singh to return. Fatah Singh took the risk and returned to Kapurthala in 1826. His territory in the Jalandhar Doab remained with him, while all others to the west of river Beas went to Ranjit Singh. Fatah Singh died in October, 1837, and the Maharaja did not touch the Kapurthala state for fear of the British. The Ahluwalia misl developed into a state on the Phulkian model, and was called Kapurthala state.

Fatah Singh was a man of soft nature, and Ranjit Singh fully exploited him. Without the British Agent's pluck he was doomed. Griffin is right in saying that "English influence barely sufficed to save Sirdar Fatah Singh." (*Rajas*, 527.)

Territories

The territories of the Ahluwalias lay in the lower Jalandhar Doab, and in the Cis-Satluj districts of Ambala, Ludhiana and Firozpur, and in a small tract of the Bari Doab. The headquarters of this misl were first at Fatahabad and later at Kapurthala.

[1]Baron Charles Hugel stayed in this building in January, 1836. He says that though its hall was protected by *Kanats*, yet "a piercing wind blew through it in all directions, and the indefatigable Jwala, with all the pains he took, could hardly succeed in making it sufficiently comfortable."

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Cis-Satluj region

Alampur, Balānwala, Bharog (57 villages), Dayalpur, Dharamkot, Dogaran, Fatahgarh, Isru (40 villages), Jagraon (66 villages out of 111), Jatwar, Kot Isa Khan, Makhu, Mandheri, Naraingarh (46 villages), Pail, Raekot (28 villages), Suhoran (24 villages), Walipur.

In total the Kapurthala state possessed 454 villages. Of these 291 villages were directly administered from Kapurthala, while 163 villages were under jagirdars.

These territories under British protection fetched an annual revenue of four lakhs of rupees.

Jalandhar Doab

Alloke, Balāchaur, Banga (24 villages), Bhukri, Bundala, Jalalabad, Jalalapur, Khadur, Khanpur, Mahtabkot, Nurmahal, Sathiala, Sultanpur, Talwan. The zamindars of Banga, Phagwara, Tanda, Urmur and Yahiyapur paid tribute.

Qazi Nur Muhammad, who was in the Panjab in 1764-65, states that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia held the city of Jalandhar. His territories in the Jalandhar Doab were worth about three lakhs a year.

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Parganahs in the Jalandhar Doab and their income

1.	Badshahpur	Rs.	70,031
2.	Hadiabad	Rs.	7,011
3.	Itwarpur	Rs.	90,195
4.	Nurmahal	Rs.	50,111
5.	Shaikhupur	Rs.	2,65,141
6.	Sultanpur	Rs.	61,105
7.	Talwan	Rs.	1,45,000
	Total	Rs.	6,88,594

Bari Doab

Bondala, Cholha, Fatahabad, Goindwal, Haibatpur, Jandiala, Kot Mahmud Khan, Patti, Qaimpur, Sirhali, Taran Taran, Vairowal.

The territories in the Bari Doab were seized by Ranjit Singh.

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CHAPTER 3

The Dallewalia Misl

GULABA SINGH ALIAS GULABA KHATRI

The founder of this misl was Gulaba Khatri, son of Shardha Ram, of village Dallewal also called Bora[1] Dalla near Derah Baba Nanak on the eastern bank of the Ravi, 50 kms north-west of Amritsar. He had a grocery shop. One night all his goods were stolen by thieves, and he was left a pauper. He wished to start his business again, but he failed to obtain a loan from any quarter. He was then a middle-aged man with a family to support; but he was not without the spirit of adventure, enterprise and zeal.

Having heard about the dare-devilry of the Sikhs and their success in acquiring booty, he came to Amritsar, waited upon Kapur Singh, and offered himself for conversion. He was advised to grow long hair, practise horsemanship, archery and use of sword, and to come after a year. Gulaba came back home. He won over 10 to 15 young men as companions, and commenced plundering. A consternation spread in the neighbourhood. The people complained to the head of the gurdwara at Derah Baba Nanak. He summoned Gulaba and advised him not to molest his neighbourhood and confine his lawless activities to distant places. By this time about one hundred youths had gathered with him.

Gulaba came to Amritsar on the occasion of the Diwali accompanied by his band, many of whom were on horseback. Kapur Singh was highly impressed and administered pahul to him and made him Gulab Singh. This appears to have happened in early thirties of the eighteenth century. One day at the head of 150 comrades he attacked Jalandhar, and having obtained a rich booty all of them returned to

[1]There is another village named Dalla near Sultanpur in Kapurthala district. Sayyid Nawazish Ali wrongly thought that Gulaba belonged to this village.

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their camp in the jungle safely. The Sikhs began to call him Gulab Singh Rathor.

During Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739, the Sikhs were acquiring a lot of wealth and a large number of horses, milch cattle and sheep and goats. The booty was to be stored in a safe place and the animals required a jungle to graze. At Gulab Singh's suggestion the Khalsa built up a small mud fort at Dallewal to serve as a store house and a place of refuge. This fort was later on razed to the ground by Zakariya Khan.

Gulab Singh with his two brothers, Dayal Singh and Gurdial Singh, and two sons Jaipal Singh and Hardayal Singh was present in the Chhota Ghallughara in 1746. Jaipal Singh was killed while fighting. Dayal Singh and Hardayal Singh were drowned in river Ravi near Basohli. Only Gurdial Singh survived.

At the formation of the Dal Khalsa in 1748, Gulab Singh was declared the head of the Dallewalia Misl with Gurdial Singh and Tara Singh Ghaiba as his deputies. The Dallewalia and Nishanwala Misls were stationed at Amritsar to protect the holy city and to serve as a reserve force in case of an emergency.

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In 1757 when Ahmad Shah Durrani was returning homeward laden with the booty from Delhi, Mathura and Agra, Gulab Singh made night attacks on him frequently. A large number of Hindu boys and girls managed to escape from the Afghan camp during these raids. At the fords on Ravi and Chenab, Gulab Singh with several other Sikh sardars captured a large number of Afghan horses.

Gulab Singh commanded a jatha of 400 men. He plundered Panipat, Rohtak, Hansi and Hisar. In conjunction with Karorasinghia Misl he left for Hardwar. On the way they plundered Saharanpur and Jawalapur. At Hardwar they entered the houses of pandas, and acquired a large booty. From Hardwar they crossed over the Ganga into Rohilkhand, and realized tribute from Dunde Khan. Gulab Singh lost his life while fighting in 1759 against Ambo Khan of Kalanaur, a small town, 27 kms west of Gurdaspur.

Tara Singh Ghaiba, 1710-1807

On the death of Gulab Singh his associate Tara Singh Ghaiba became the leader of the Dallewalia Misl. He was considered about one hundred years old when he died in 1807. So he seems to have been born approximately about 1710. He was a resident of village Kang, 6 kms south of Lohian on the eastern side of Bein stream on the road

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going to Nakodar, Phillaur and Ludhiana. He was a poor Jat goatherd. He possessed about one hundred goats. He used to pass his flock over the swollen Bein by means of ropes, and thus won the title of Ghaiba, meaning one who could adopt mysterious devices. His goats were stolen by a notorious Gujar robber Sulaiman. His few household effects were carried off by thieves. In sheer desperation and despair he left his village, became a Sikh, and took to robbery Tara Singh's reckless bravery won him many a companion.

One day in the beginning of 1757, he came across a foraging party of Ahmad Shah Durrani. They had plundered a few villages, and were in search of a ford to cross the Bein. They seized Tara Singh to show them the place where they could cross with their loaded horses. He told them that the stream could be crossed on horse-back only. They gave him a horse and asked him to show the way by actually crossing it. On crossing the river he galloped off into the jungle, and won a fine horse as a prize.

At the end of March, 1757, Durrani's advance party under his son Timur Shah was carrying the treasure from Delhi to Afghanistan. A report reached Amritsar that this treasure had crossed river Ravi. Tara Singh Ghaiba and Karora Singh decided to seize it before it crossed river Chenab. At the head of a select body of horsemen they dashed along the foot of the hills, and covered a distance of about 125 kms in one day. On reaching their destination they rested for a while, gulped down parched gram with cold water and refreshed their steeds. Their scouts brought the intelligence that locked boxes full of gold mohars chained together were lying near the bank of river Chenab under the guard of a few soldiers, while all others were fast asleep. The Sikhs reached the spot in perfect silence, cut down the guards, broke open the boxes, filled their leather bags with coins, and disappeared instantly. They returned to Amritsar safe and sound.

The Dallewalia misl rose to great power and eminence under Tara Singh Ghaiba. In 1760 he seized the parganahs of Dharamkot and Fatahgarh lying to the south of the Satluj. He gave Fatahgarh to his cousins Dharam Singh and Kur Singh of village Kang. Dharamkot was kept under him. In the Jalandhar Doab he took Dakhni from Sharf-ud-din Afghan. He occupied Nawanshahar Doaba. Then he captured Rahon and its neighbourhood. Rahon stood on a high eminence commanding a good view. It was made the seat of his government. He expelled Manj Rajputs from Nakodar. He took possession of a large number of villages situated along the right bank of the

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Satluj including Mahātpur and Kot Badal Khan.

In March 1763, Tara Singh was going to attend the Hola festival at Anandpur. He was on his way from Ludhiana to Rupar. In the vicinity of Morindah he caught sight of a convoy going to Sarhind. It was plundered and the Hola festival was celebrated with great eclat and enthusiasm. In the plunder of Kasur in May, 1763, he obtained cash and jewellery worth four lakhs of rupees. In January, 1764, at the fall of Sarhind, Tara Singh acquired Ramuwala and Māri in Moga tahsil, and at both these places he built forts. Ghungrana was also occupied.

In the Ganga Doab and at Delhi

Tara Singh participated in most of the Sikh campaigns in the Ganga Doab, Rohilkhand and Delhi. In 1775 three Sikh leaders, Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya, Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia and Baghel Singh Karorasinghia gathered near Karnal. On 22 April, 1775, they crossed the Jamuna at the Begi ghat, a little above Kunjpura. Zabita Khan, son of Najib-ud-daulah Rohilla, shut himself up in his fort of Ghausgarh, 30 kms north-west of Muzaffarnagar. A tribute of Rs. 60,000 was realized from the Turkoman families of Lakhnauti and Gangoh. The faujdar of Ambehta paid Rs. 2,000. Nanautah was set on fire. The faujdar of Deoband, Taza Beg Khan, was burnt alive. After fourteen days' fighting, the people of Deoband paid a tribute of Rs.12,000. Deoband became the *rākhi* of Rae Singh Bhangi. He fixed an annual tribute of Rs. 600 only. A handsome boy of Usmani Shaikhs, 8 or 9 years old, was captured by Rae Singh. He was set free on receiving a large sum of money. Then they marched upon Ghausgarh. Zabita Khan paid a sum of Rs. 50,000 without fighting. They turned towards Delhi. On their way they plundered the villages of Bārah Sādāt. Shamli, Kairana, Kandhla and Mirath were ravaged. They crossed over the Jamuna by the Kutana ghat. Advancing towards Delhi, they set on fire Paharganj and Jaisinghpura on 15 July, 1775.

In March, 1783, he was with other Sikhs in Delhi. He brought two guns from the Red Fort and kept them at Rahon. He rendered great help to Baghel Singh in constructing seven gurdwaras at Delhi.

Cordial relations with Patiala

Tara Singh Ghaiba maintained cordial relations with Patiala. In 1765, he helped Amar Singh in suppressing the revolt of Prince Himmat Singh who claimed the crown for himself. Tara Singh mar-

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ried his son Dasaundha Singh[1] to Chand Kaur, daughter of Kanwar Himmat Singh of Patiala in 1777. There were 12,000 men in his marriage party. They stayed at Patiala for ten days. It cost the state five lakhs of rupees.

After this relationship he always helped Patiala in times of difficulty. In 1778 he came to Patiala to repel the attack of Hari Singh Dallewalia of Sialba and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.

In 1779, Abdul Ahad, a minister of Delhi, accompanied by a royal prince, led an expedition against Patiala. Nanun Mal, Diwan of Raja Amar Singh, and Raja's brother-in-law, Maha Singh, arrived in the Mughal camp. They were granted an audience by the Prince on 13 September, 1779. Diwan Nanun Mal offered banker's bills (*hundis*) worth five lakhs and an extra sum of Rs. 25,000 by way of nazar to the Prince. Abdul Ahad demanded Amar Singh's presence in the imperial camp. Nanun Mal replied that the Raja would not come into his camp, and that he should accept the amount already offered to him, and retire. On 20 September Nanun Mal raised the sum to seven lakhs. Abdul Ahad insisted on Amar Singh's attendance.

Abdul Ahad moved his camp towards Patiala and reached Pehowa on 23 September, 1779. His troops plundered the neighbouring Patiala territory, and drove away cattle. Nanun Mal waited on the Nawab, placed five lakhs' bills before him, and offered to pay the balance on his return journey. Abdul Ahad demanded thirty lakhs. On Diwan's refusal he tore up five lakhs bills. Nanun Mal had already sought help from Tara Singh Ghaiba and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Tara Singh arrived at Patiala at the head of 15,000 troops. The combined forces of Tara Singh Ghaiba and Amar Singh faced the Nawab. A great battle was fought on 7 October, 1779, in which the imperialists were victorious. Amar Singh and Tara Singh fell back and shut themselves up in the fort. The imperial army laid siege to the town of Patiala on 8 October. Hard fighting took place on 8 and 9 October. At this stage Abdul Ahad's troops demanded the arrears of their pay. His soldiers, Mughals and Afghans, began to fight between themselves. Then the news arrived that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was coming at the head of Dal Khalsa numbering two lakhs to help Amar Singh. The Nawab was frightened. He raised the siege and hurriedly retreated without getting anything. On his way back he was

[1]Gian Singh in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 569, calls him Gujar Singh; but the statement of Muhammad Hasan in his *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 103, and in Persian manuscript, *Halat Riyasat Patiala*, 63a, is more reliable.

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plundered by the Cis-Satluj Sikh sardars of his belongings.

From February to June, 1781, another imperial general, Shafi, carried on a campaign against the Cis-Satluj Sikh sardars. He called upon Raja Amar Singh to help him. Amar Singh's vakil, Chain Singh, waited upon the general on 17 March, 1781, and assured him that his master would soon join him. On 25 March Chain Singh's letter was received stating that Raja Amar Singh at the head of his troops had left Patiala. But near Ambala his progress was checked by the Trans-Satluj Sikhs. Tara Singh Ghaiba had intercepted Patiala forces, while Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and other Sikhs began plundering Patiala territory. The vakil of Raja Amar Singh offered them heavy bribes. They retired to Khanna where Amar Singh had agreed to come to settle terms with them.

In December, 1784, Mahadji Sindhia was appointed by Emperor Shah Alam II, Regent of the Mughal Empire. He was hard-pressed for money. In April, 1789, he sent an expedition under Rane Khan and Ali Bahadur to realize tribute from the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. Baghel Singh invited the Trans-Satluj Sikhs for assistance against Rane Khan. Meanwhile Nanun Mal offered four lakhs of rupees as annual tribute and two lakhs of rupees for the expenses of the army. Rane Khan demanded eight lakhs in all. Nanun Mal offered to pay the full amount if he would drive away about 12,000 Sikhs of the Trans-Satluj then lying encamped on the Patiala boundary. Rane Khan thought that the minister was bluffing. He ordered his army to attack Patiala. Tara Singh Ghaiba opposed him on 15 April, 1789. About 250 men were killed and wounded on both sides. Rane Khan came to know that the other Sikh forces were coming from across the Satluj. He hurriedly made peace and retired.

Tara Singh Ghaiba helped Patiala Rajas in their war against Bhattis of Bhatinda—Sirsa region. He supported Phulkian Rajas against George Thomas in 1799.

Repelled Sikh attacks on Dakhni

Tara Singh Ghaiba kept his treasure in the fort of Dakhni. At one time there were twenty lakhs of rupees in it. This money was coveted by other Sikh chiefs. Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia and Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra besieged this fort for twenty days, but they were bravely opposed by Tara Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also attempted twice to seize this treasure, but failed.

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His religious enthusiasm

Tara Singh was a zealous Sikh. He believed in converting people to Sikh religion by love and affection. He converted Chaudhri Gauhar Das of Kang village. His example was followed by both the villages, Kang Kalan and Kang Khurd. He gave liberal help to the needy new converts.

Distribution of territory

Tara Singh distributed his territory among all his four sons. Jhanda Singh was given Nakodar and Mahilpur. Dasaundha Singh had Dakhni. Gujar Singh possessed parganahs of Ghungrana and Baddowal. The youngest whose name could not be traced was kept with him at Rahon.

Extinction of the Misl

Gujar Singh was in the Cis-Satluj region, and held the parganah of Ghungrana. In 1806 during his first expedition into the Cis-Satluj country, Maharaja Ranjit Singh expelled Gujar Singh from his territory. Five villages worth of Rs. 3,550 annually were given to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, seven villages worth Rs. 3,350 per annum to Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha, Ghungrana proper with 36 villages worth Rs. 23,415 to Karam Singh of Nagla, and three villages of the annual value of Rs. 2,255 to his maternal uncle, Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. A couple of villages worth Rs. 2,500 were left with Gujar Singh. During his second campaign in 1807 twelve villages in the Dharamkot region belonging to Rani Ratan Kaur, widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba, worth Rs. 7,500 were seized.

The reminder of Tara Singh's territory in the Cis-Satluj region consisting of 62 villages worth Rs. 22,634 was given to Garbha Singh. Wadni was also seized at this time. In March, 1808, the remaining 15 villages of Wadni, were captured by Mohkam Chand. Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted the whole district of Wadni to his mother-in-law, Sada Kanwar. She established her residence in Raoki village, and paid into the Lahore treasury Rs. 15,000 annually. The villages of Wadni and Himatpur were left with Mian Nudan, original owner of the estate. In April, 1809, under the Treaty of Amritsar, Ranjit Singh lost his authority over the Cis-Satluj region. Sada Kanwar appealed to Sir David Ochterlony for permission to acquire Wadni and Himatpur from Nudan. By a decree issued on 21 November, 1811, Ochterlony allowed her to seize the two villages in dispute. Just

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then Nudan died and was succeeded by his son, Amar Singh. Again she applied to oust Amar Singh. The permission was given on 20 July, 1816. She led a small force from the other side of the Satluj, and expelled Amar Singh from both the places in 1817.

Tara Singh realized that Maharaja Ranjit Singh would seize all his territory and property. He began to spend as much in charity as possible. He established a free *langar* in every village in his territory and gave liberal donations to all who sought his help.

Tara Singh thought that by submitting to Ranjit Singh, he might be able to save his territory in the Jalandhar Doab as well as treasury. He waited upon the Maharaja. Ranjit Singh called him Babaji and his teacher saying he had taken some lessons in the use of arms from him. Ranjit Singh's policy was to establish friendly relations with powerful sardars. Then he engaged them in various campaigns, and wished that they were killed in the action to justify his seizure of their country and property. In the invasion of Naraingarh in 1807 he taunted Fatah Singh Kalianwala as a coward and timid person. He immediately rushed into the front lines and was shot dead. The Maharaja was delighted to get rid of a powerful chief. Tara Singh, nearly one hundred years old, was wounded in this battle and he died on his way back before reaching Rahon.

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The Maharaja went straight to Rahon. He waited upon Tara Singh's widow, Ratan Kanwar and said:

"Tara Singh was my father (*peo*) and you are my mother. Tara Singh was also my teacher as I learnt the art of using arms (*shastar vidya*) from him. I have come for condolence (*makān*)."

The lady knew why he was there. She offered him six lakhs of rupees in cash, one elephant, five horses fuly caparisoned. Ranjit Singh accepted all these, and gave an eye-signal to Diwan Mohkam Chand to attack. Ratan Kanwar was supported by her troops and subjects. But the *qiladar* had been already won over. The fort was captured. Thirty-five lakhs of rupees in cash, and large quantities of gold and jewellery and other valuable goods fell into his hands. Ratan Kanwar with the widow's clothes on her body only with her youngest son fled across river Satluj in extreme poverty. Kartar Singh Kalaswalia[1] says: *'Sab kuchh chhīn liyā aur thuthā hāth pakrāya.'*

Then came the turn of Tara Singh's sons. Dasaundha Singh's territory was given to Sahib Singh Bedi of Una. Jhanda Singh's territories were annexed. Both these sons held territories in the

[1]*Tegh Khalsa*, p. 235.

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Jalandhar Doab. Gujar Singh had already been dispossessed. The two brothers lived with Hindu *faqirs* in village Baloki in parganah Nakodar. Tara Singh had granted them a revenue-free jagir. (Sādhu-on ne un ki bānh pakri.) This was the way how the Maharaja treated the old Sikh nobility who had liberated the Panjab from foreign rule and from foreign invaders. *Ustād ke beton ki aisi pālnā ki jo tukre se mohtāj kar diyā.*[1] This was the regard shown to the sons of his teacher that they were reduced to beggary.

Khushwaqt Rae says: 'Khāndān-e-o rā barbād kard'. His family was ruined.

Thus the Dallewalia misl disappeared from existence. Some of its sardars in the Cis-Satluj region continued as individuals.

Prominent Dallewalia Sardars

1. *Bakht Singh and company* : Bakht Singh, Jai Singh, Kanwar Singh, Mathan Singh, Ram Singh, Sahib Singh and Sardha Singh of village Kang took possession of the parganah of Khamanon containing 55 villages. These seven sardars commanded 126 soldiers. The parganah was divided according to the number of horses under the control of each.

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2. *Budh Singh* possessed parganah of Garhshankar, 42 kms from Hoshiarpur on the road to Rupar, and Takhtgarh.

3. *Bhai Desu Singh* descended from celebrated Bhai Ram Dayal, who lived like a saint and was called Bhai or brother. He was closely allied to the Phulkian family. Desu Singh's father was Gurbakhsh Singh who maintained cordial relations with Alha Singh of Patiala. He belonged to village Lalpur near Taran Taran, 23 kms south of Amritsar. He died in 1760 leaving behind six sons. The eldest was Budh Singh. In January, 1764, he seized the parganahs of Amlu Arnauli, Bangar, Derah, Kularkharyal, Mustafabad (41 kms south of Ambala), Sindhuwal, Tandwal (25 kms south of Ambala), and Thanesar, of which he was dispossessed by Bhanga Singh. In 1767 he seized the principality of Kaithal from two Afghan chiefs, Bhikbakhsh Khan and Neamat Khan. He expelled the Sayyids of Pundri and annexed it.

In 1779 Abdul Ahad, the Delhi minister, led an expedition against the Cis-Satluj Sikhs. On 9 September, 1779, the Nawab sent Baghel Singh, Gajpat Singh and Sada Singh to bring Desu Singh to his camp near Thanesar. Baghel Singh introduced him to the Nawab

[1]Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 571.

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thus: "Desu Singh has arrived. His country which has been taken possession of by Raja Amar Singh may be restored to him." Desu Singh offered as nazar five gold coins, two bows, five cotton bed-sheets and two horses. He was granted a khilat of five pieces, a sarpech and a sword, while two doshalas were given to his companions.

Abdul Ahad demanded three lakhs of rupees as tribute from Desu Singh. He offered to pay two lakhs. The Nawab flared up and raised his claim to five lakhs. During the night of 13 September in a private conversation Gajpat Singh of Jind said to the Nawab: "The tribute from us can be realized at any moment; but it is very difficult to get money from Desu Singh. As a politic device arrest all the sardars including myself. Afterwards release us and keep Desu Singh in confinement until he pays his dues." Abdul Ahad called in his tent Diwan Nanun Mal, Maha Singh, Ram Dayal, Gajpat Singh and Desu Singh, and apprehended all of them. Then Taj Muhammad Khan reported that all except Desu Singh were willing to pay their arrears. They were set free with the exception of Desu Singh. Along with eight of his companions he was put in confinement. The question of his tribute was under discussion on 14 September. The Nawab said to Desu Singh: "Withdraw from your taluqa, and the Emperor's direct administration would be established there. Where are the guns and other things looted from Abul Qasim Khan (the Nawab's brother defeated and killed on 11 March, 1776) ? For a long time you have been living on plunder, this will be taken from you." Desu Singh replied: "What I acquired I spent on my troops. In my house there is no money. Do what you please."

The Diwan of Desu Singh ultimately offered five lakhs as tribute and 1¼ lakhs for expenses, payable in one month's time. The condition was that Desu Singh's estates should be confirmed on him under a royal rescript and protected from encroachments by Raja Amar Singh. After some time a tribute of four lakhs was settled upon Desu Singh. Three lakhs were immediately realized, and for the payment of the balance, his son Lal Singh was taken as a hostage. Desu Singh left the camp on 26 September, 1779.

Desu Singh died in September, 1780.[1] His wife sent her agents to

[1]Griffin puts his death in 1781. His statement regarding Lal Singh is also wrong. My account is based on *Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla* which were issued every morning from the Mughal court at Delhi. Griffin writes: "When Desu Singh died in 1781, Lal Singh was in confinement as a rebel against his father, and Behal Singh, the elder son did all he could to keep his brother in prison; but he contrived to escape, killed his elder brother and took possession of all the estates of his father". *Rajas*, 51 fn.

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Najaf Khan, Prime Minister, to secure the release of her son Lal Singh. Raja Amar Singh threatened her for negotiating directly with the Delhi court. On his instigation, the second wife of Desu Singh seized all the cash and property, and opposed the release of Lal Singh. She entrusted the control of her estates to her own son Bahal Singh. Najaf Khan demanded Rs. 50,000 as ransom. Lal Singh's mother having no money felt exasperated. One day in desperation she went to her co-wife's residence, seized her by the neck and holding a dagger at her stomach cried out:

"Unless you pay for my son's release, I will kill you." She immediately paid 1,000 ashrafis (Rs. 20,000) and promised to pay another Rs. 20,000 in a few days. The balance of Rs. 10,000 was raised by subscription.

On 4 October, 1780, Najaf Khan placed Lal Singh in the custody of Najaf Quli with authority to liberate him for Rs. 50,000. Darbari Mal, an agent of Amar Singh, applied to the Wazir that if he would delay the release of Lal Singh by ten days, he would secure twenty thousand rupees more as ransom. The Nawab got back Lal Singh from Najaf Quli. Shiv Ram, Diwan of Najaf Quli, pleaded for the release of Lal Singh for fifty thousand rupees. Desu Singh's wife remitted Rs. 50,000 in the beginning of November, 1780, and Lal Singh was set free on 11 November, 1780. Ishar Singh was ordered to supply the bodyguard and to deliver him up safely at Kaithal.

In 1795, Nana Rao Maratha invaded Cis-Satluj territory of the Sikhs. He started fighting against Bhanga Singh. Some Sikh sardars who were opposed to Bhanga Singh tried to excite Lal Singh to claim Thanesar as it originally belonged to his family. Lal Singh knew Bhanga Singh's nature and declined to entertain this proposal. The Sikhs then incited Nana Rao to demand a heavy tribute from Lal Singh whom they proclaimed to be very rich. Nana took up the hint. Setting up his own government at Thanesar he marched to Thanah, 4 kms west. He sent a message to Bhai Lal Singh to pay tribute. The Bhai protested against this high-handed action. He collected his own troops, and sought assistance from Patiala. Bibi Sahib Kaur, sister of Raja Sahib Singh and wife of Jaimal Singh Kanhiya, a lady of remarkable generalship and diplomacy who was then acting as prime minister of Patiala, responded to his call at the head of 2,000 troops.

Nana Rao was greatly upset by the night attacks of the Sikhs on his camp. He also found that the strength of Bhai Lal Singh's forces

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was daily increasing. His own troops were suffering from want of water and food as all supplies from Thanesar were cut off by the Sikhs. Nana Rao retreated to Delhi.

George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, had established himself as the Raja of Haryana with his capital at Hansi. His small kingdom extended up to the borders of Jind. In November, 1798, he attacked Jind. The Raja sought assistance from Patiala and Kaithal. In the beginning of December, 1798, Lal Singh left for Jind at the head of his troops. The garrison of Jind and Lal Singh's troops attacked the besiegers. Four horses and many men of Thomas were killed and wounded in the trenches. This took place on 10 December, 1798. Lal Singh was pressing Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala to join them. After a siege of five months George Thomas withdrew.

Delhi, Gurgaon, Rewari, Rohtak, Hisar and Sirsa, were under Daulat Rao Sindhia. The French General, Bourquien, in his service, was holding Delhi. The Sikh chiefs joined Bourquien and expelled Thomas. Then the second Maratha war broke out. General Lake, the British commander-in-chief, came to Delhi. Bhai Lal Singh realized that the British would win. He went to Jind and held discussion with Raja Bhag Singh. He prevailed upon him to join Lord Lake before the battle. General Lake defeated Bourquien in the battle of Delhi on 11 September, 1803, and seized the imperial capital on 13 September.

Lord Lake was so deeply impressed by Lal Singh's co-operation and enthusiasm that on 7 March, 1804, he granted him a Sanad or a letter of authority confirming him in the possession of Faridpur and Barsat parganahs.

The other Sikh chiefs were continually raiding the Ganga Doab which was now under the British. This happened throughout 1804. Lal Singh had brought Bhag Singh into the British camp. Bhag Singh persuaded Baghel Singh to join them. These three chiefs remained with Lord Lake for several months, and proved useful to the General and Colonel Ochterlony. Then Bhag Singh and Lal Singh volunteered to help Colonel Burn who was engaged in suppressing the Sikh and Maratha raids in the Ganga Doab. Burn first defeated the Sikhs, and then turned towards Marathas. Lal Singh and Bhag Singh held the district of Saharanpur in Burn's absence, and maintained law and order there.

The other Sikh chiefs were giving great trouble to the British by plundering their territory mainly on the other side of the Jamuna.

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Lal Singh joined Colonel Burn who defeated the Sikh chiefs on 18 December, 1804. In March, 1808, Bhag Singh of Jind, Lal Singh of Kaithal, and an agent of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala exerted pressure on British authorities to protect them from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This resulted in the Treaty of Amritsar, 1809.

Griffin writes: "Lal Singh was, at the time of British advance northwards, in 1809, the most powerful Cis-Satluj Chief, after the Raja of Patiala. He was a very able man, though utterly untrustworthy, and so violent and unscrupulous that the English authorities had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to maintain anything like order." His annual income was Rs. 2,25,000 and cavalry 600.

Kaithal was the second largest state after Patiala in the Cis-Satluj region. Bhai Udai Singh, the chief of Kaithal, died without a male issue on 15 March, 1843. For some time past the British Government had been following the policy of absorbing small Sikh states. A part of the estate worth one lakh of rupees a year was given to his collateral Bhai Gulab Singh of Arnauli. The remaining territory to the value of four lakhs annually was to be annexed. Udai Singh's widow, the Rani, claimed that like Rani Daya Kanwar of Ambala, she should be allowed to retain the state under her control. This plea was rejected. Sir George Campbell wrote : "On the failures of sons, the daughters did not succeed to real property, but the wife did."

Sir George Clark was the political agent for Cis-Satluj States with his headquarters at Ambala. He resolved to seize Kaithal by force, The 31st Regiment consisting of 1,200 strong, a grand old Corps, having twenty-three years service in India, the 3rd Light Dragoons and some Artillery in command of Colonel Bolton who had served in the Peninsular War under Sir Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, marched to Kaithal. Clark accompanied this force in his political capacity.

The Rani strongly objected to this proceeding and got ready to resist. Kaithal was then a small town surrounded by a high brick wall. It is 90 kms from Ambala Cantonment. This force reached near Kaithal on the third night, on April 10, 1843. The Rani with her soldiers and Commander Teg Singh appeared at a little distance from the British camp. They were armed with matchlocks. They kept on lighting matchsticks and shouting "We are coming". In consequence the British troops stood in arms the whole night. The fatigue of the journey, the sleepless night and the feeling of their invincibility had made them less energetic. In early hours of next morning the Rani delivered

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a vehement assault on the British camp. In the words of Sir George Campbell: "Her troops completely routed the British troops. They fled back to Karnal." Another stronger force was despatched. It was joined by the Maharaja of Patiala at the head of 1,000 horse and two guns. Teg Singh with many of his Sikh troops was arrested. Teg Singh's property including four elephants, two brass guns and lots of other goods was confiscated.

The Rani loaded her treasure and precious goods in a large number of carts and managed to escape in the night. George Clark came to know of it the following morning. Colonel Bolton was sent in pursuit of her. They travelled the whole day to overtake her. Having failed in their effort they encamped in the jungle for the night and returned to Kaithal the next day. Most probably she took shelter at Arnauli.

Having lost the treasure, Sir George Clark then allowed the troops to enter the palace. The orders were that everything found in the palace belonged to the British Government and nobody was to keep anything for himself. A British officer writes: "While rummaging in the palace, I saw a dagger I greatly coveted (perhaps studded with diamonds), and wrapping the blade in rags, I tied it to my leg, and so passed the searchers." After retirement in England he says: "I have my dagger still."

Another interesting incident is narrated by him : "The men had broken the legs off a set of metal chairs and set them up to play at skittles, and after the game left them lying about ; one of these was carried away by a soldier, and he afterwards found it was made of solid silver."

Kaithal was annexed to British territory, and Henry Lawrence was appointed in charge of the district. He visited almost every village in the months from April to July, 1843 and inspected the records of the past ten years. He found land revenue was farmed out to contractors. Lawrence got rid of these middle-men, and gave leases to owners and cultivators of the soil. He abolished all cesses and extra charges, such as cattle tax, presents to officials, supplies of grass and wood and forced labour. He compelled the zamindars to dig new wells and to repair old ones. He encouraged the cultivation of cotton, potatoes, sugar and timber trees. He himself planted some miles of road with trees, and gave away large quantities of seed plants for plantations.

In his report dated "Kurnaul, 10th November, 1843," Henry Lawrence declared that he had made the summary settlement for a term of three years. At the end of his one year's administration of Kaithal,

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he reported that lawlessness had been greatly checked. Many notorious offenders were in goal. Many more had emigrated to other places. All fire-arms had been seized from the people. Only one sword was allowed for ten houses to be retained. He suggested to higher authorities to develop roads and a system of drainage. He recommended construction of a canal as "water being 60 or 100 cubits from the surface, the means of the people seldom admit digging of wells, even for drinking purposes."[1]

Henry Lawrence admitted: "Our sway is that of the sword." He explained: "The true basis of British power in India is often lost sight of, namely, a well-paid, well-disciplined army, relying, from experience, on the good faith, wisdom, and energy of its leaders."

4. *Deva Singh's* territory was situated in the Jalandhar Doab and it fetched him one lakh and a quarter annually. He possessed a few villages in the Cis-Satluj area also. When Ranjit Singh was eliminating the Sikh sardars, he came to Sialba with some cash and jewellery. His territory and property in the Jalandhar Doab were immediately confiscated by the Maharaja.

5. *Dharam Singh* was a cousin of Tara Singh Ghaiba. He captured in 1764 a cluster of villages in the centre of which he founded a new village called after him Dharamsinghwala. His descendants still live there. In the Jalandhar Doab he possessed Lohian, 52 kms from Jalandhar city.

6. *Diwan Singh Landah*, a Kalal of Basi near Amritsar, took possession of the parganahs of Akalgarh, Barara, 32 kms from Ambala, Saran and Sikandra. He had 750 horse and 250 foot. He was one of the Sikh sardars whom Abdul Ahad Khan made an offer of imperial service in October, 1774. He also participated in the battle of Amirnagar on 11 March, 1776, in which Abdul Ahad's brother Abul Qasim was slain. In August, 1779, he joined Abdul Ahad Khan in his expedition against Patiala. On 10 February, 1780, Diwan Singh with forty horsemen, interviewed Aman Khan, deputy of Zabita Khan at Basehra, 18 kms north-east of Muzaffarnagar, to settle the amount of tribute. No decision was made. On 5 November, 1780, Diwan Singh with three other Sikh sardars, crossed the Jamuna with 1500 horse at Ghat Makanak near Kunjpura. Zabita Khan was about 15 kms away from them. Zabita Khan deputed his vakil Bilas Rae to negotiate with the Sikhs. On 5 November, Bilas Rae brought the Sikh

[1]See Appendix on p. 70.

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sardars to the camp of Zabita Khan at Bidauli, 16 kms south-east of Karnal. Diwan Singh presented the Nawab with a horse, a pair of bed-sheets and a Lahore bow. The other sardars offered a bow and a pair of bed-sheets each. Consultations lasted for three quarters of an hour. The Sikhs were put up with Gulab Gujar. Discussions continued upto 9 November, 1780.

7. *Hari Singh Lang* (lame), a Virk Jat of village Kaleki near Kasur, seized a large tract on both sides of the Satluj along the foot of the Shivalik hills. He captured the parganahs of Awankot, Korali, Rupar, Sialba and Siswan He took possession of the fort of Khizarabad which was built by Chaudhri Tek Chand. He seized the parganahs of Bahrampur, Chanderi and Sahādat from the Raja of Nalagarh, and Berian and Machholi from the Raja of Bilaspur. The Raja of Jaswan purchased peace by surrendering one half of the revenues of Mānaswāl. He annexed Chamkaur by expelling Sodhi Nahar Singh who had acquired it in 1764. He captured ten villages of Budh Singh Singhpuria. Hari Singh possessed 106 villages. He commanded 1,500 horse and 500 foot.

He abducted Rājān, the beautiful widowed sister-in-law of Chaudhri Chuhar Mal of Phagwara, brother of the husband of Patiala princess Rajindar Kanwar. This romance remained the subject of a love song for about a century. He had several sons, but only two, Charat Singh and Deva Singh, survived him. To Charat Singh he gave Rupar worth Rs. 80,000, and to Deva Singh Sialba worth about two lakhs. The partition was made in 1792. On Hari Singh's death in 1793, during the minority of her son, Charat Singh, Rājān ruled over the state. After Charat Singh's death, his widow, Raj Kanwar, daughter of Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad, administered her territory on behalf of Bhup Singh who along with Deva Singh of Sialba submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1807. Gujar Singh and Surjan Singh Sodhis of Makhowal were made independent of Deva Singh and directly tributary to Bhup Singh. Their revenues amounted to Rs. 77, 600.

8. *Jhanda Singh* of Sultanwind in Amritsar district captured in Hoshiarpur district 16 villages in Basi Kalān, 17 villages in parganah Jamaitgarh and 40 villages in Kathgarh, worth one lakh of rupees annually. He passed away in 1797. His son Tara Singh built five small forts to protect his estates. He submitted to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

9. *Kirpal Singh* of Bhatinda side captured Shamgarh in Karnal district. He was related to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa.

10. *Kur Singh* was a cousin of Tara Singh Ghaiba. He occupied a

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number of villages round about Kang. His descendants still live at Kang.

11. *Mansa Singh* held Garhdiwala.

12. *Saundha Singh Jat* of Narowal in Sialkot district captured Khanna in Ludhiana district worth Rs. 30,000 a year. He commanded 225 horse and 75 foot. His only son Daya Singh died without a male issue. His estate was taken possession by Daya Kaur, daughter of Saundha Singh and widow of Hari Singh son of Mehar Singh and nephew of Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. At her death it lapsed to the Jind State.

13. *Sujan Singh,* and his two brothers Man Singh and Dan Singh were Badecha Jats of village Dhianpur in Amritsar district. They captured the parganah of Tihara south of the Satluj. Sujan Singh was killed in a battle. Tara Singh amply provided for the deceased's family. The descendants of Sujan Singh and Dan Singh still hold jagirs at Shahkot and those of Man Singh at Dhondowal.

14. *Tara Singh Kakar* captured Kothala, Nurpur, Phillaur, Siala, and a number of other villages along the southern bank of river Satluj.

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Territories

The territories of the Dallewalia Misl were situated in the Jalandhar Doab, and the northern portions of Ludhiana, Ambala and Karnal districts, with some estates in Firozpur district. The headquarters of this misl were at Rahon.

Cis-Satluj region

Akalgarh, Amlu, Arnauli, Awankot, Bahrampur, Bangar, Barara, Berian, Chanderi, Dera, Dharamkot, Dharamsinghwala, Dhondowal, Fatahgarh, Ghungrana, Indri, Kahod, Kaithal, Kakrala, Khairabad, Khamanon, Kheri, Khizarabad, Korali, Kularkharyal, Machholi, Mari, Mustafabad, Nurpur, Pundri, Ramuwala, Rupar, Sahādat, Saran, Shahkot, Sialba, Sikandra, Sindhuwal, Siswan, Tandwal, Tihara, Wadni.

Jalandhar Doab

Bundiala, Dakhni Sarae, Garhdiwala, Garhshankar, Haibatpur, Kang, Lohian, Mahtabpur, Nakodar, Nawanshahar, Phillaur, Rahon, Talwan, Takhtgarh.

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Parganahs in the Jalandhar Doab and their income

1. Nakodar	Rs.	31,101
2. Rahon	Rs.	6,11,510
Total	Rs.	6,42,611

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APPENDIX

The following charges were made by the Kaithal chiefs on a crop worth Rs. 1,000:

	Rs.	As.	Pies
Mushakhsah or the fixed demand	310	0	0
Additional percentage on above at 25.5	79	0	9
Sirdebi	30	1	0
Nazarana to State	19	0	0
Nazarana to Musāhibs	6	0	0
Nazar to all the Ranis	13	0	0
Bricks to repair fort etc.	13	12	0
Qazi allowance	1	0	0
Talbāna	1	0	0
Nirā at fixed rate	4	0	0
Thānādāri	14	0	0
Ugāhi or expense of collection	7	3	6
Amini and Record keeper	4	10	6
Total Rs.	502	11	9

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CHAPTER 4

The Faizullahpuria or Singhpuria Misl

KAPUR SINGH

The founder of this misl was Kapur Singh. His father Dalip Singh with his two sons, Kapur Singh and Dan Singh, embraced Sikhism at the same time by taking pahul from Bhai Mani Singh about 1721. They were Virk Jats of village Faizullahpur[1] near Amritsar. Kapur Singh was born in 1697, two years before the foundation of the Khalsa. Kapur Singh became a Sikh when the severest persecution of the Sikhs was going on. He was fired with the enthusiasm of a crusader. He had firm faith in the destiny of the Khalsa. His optimism was unsurpassed.

"Two men looked through prison bars,
One saw mud, the other stars."

Zakariya Khan was the viceroy of the Panjab from 1726 to 1745. From 1726 to 1732 he spared no pains in inflicting the heaviest punishments on the Sikhs. This policy failed to suppress them. Ratan Singh Bhangu, pages 256-63, says that the viceroy decided to adopt the policy of pacification. Subeg Singh, a Sikh, was a Persian-knowing clerk in a government office at Lahore. He was ordered to lead a deputation to the Sikhs. Chak Guru (Amritsar) with twelve villages was to be given to them in jagir. Subeg Singh suggested that the offer of a jagir should have some presents and honours attached to it. Zakariya Khan gave him a khilat and the title of Nawab for their leader. A bag of gold coins was to be given at the same time.

Becomes Nawab, 1733

Ratan Singh Bhangu states that the most prominent Sikh among

[1]Muhammad Hasan says that Kapur Singh seized Faizullahpur from its founder Faizullah Khan. Griffin in *Ranjit Singh*, p. 81 agrees with him. Gian Singh holds that Faizullahpur was founded by Faizullah Beg Mughal in 1435 AD (*Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 127 fn.; *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 585.)

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them was Darbara Singh. The documents granting a jagir and a title, the khilat and the bag of gold were placed before him. He rejected them outright. The Sangat prevailed upon Kapur Singh to accept the offer, and he became Nawab Kapur Singh. All the Sikhs repaired to their holy city to live in ease and comfort after a long, hard, and strenuous life. Attendance upon the viceroy or any other government official was exempted.

Two divisions of the Khalsa

At Amritsar one year passed in peace. Darbara Singh died in 1734, and the whole burden fell upon Nawab Kapur Singh. The younger men were in revolt owing to the difference of opinion and outlook on the problems of life. Nawab Kapur Singh immediately divided the Khalsa at Amritsar into two groups, of younger men and older people, called Taruna Dal and Budha Dal. Believing in the sanctity of number five in Sikh religion, each Dal was further sub-divided into five groups for the sake of convenience. Kapur Singh's own group was additional.

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The members of the Taruna Dal were soon fed up with their inactive life. They deeply hated to live on the dole of government. Hence they dispersed to their homes. Ratan Singh Bhangu[1] says that the Sikh young men indulged in illegal activities, and gave offence to the government. Zakariya Khan proposed to Kapur Singh that the Sikh young men should be recruited in the Mughal army. Kapur Singh did not agree. The viceroy then suggested that the government would remit full revenues if they settled as peaceful agriculturists. Kapur Singh did not give any assurance. Thereupon Zakariya Khan confiscated the jagir towards the close of 1735.

Shahid Ganj

The Taruna Dal heaved a sigh of relief to regain freedom of action. Kapur Singh and his men left Amritsar. All the Sikhs of the Budha Dal and Taruna Dal retired via Taran Taran towards Hari Ke Patan. Zakariya Khan organised moving columns called Gashti Fauj mounted on horses and camels to pursue the Sikhs. The Sikhs falling into their hands were sent to Lahore to be executed at a place which the Sikhs called Shahid Ganj.

[1] *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 217-18.

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In the Lakhi Jungle

Rae Kalha of Raekot controlled the whole area lying to the south of river Satluj including the parganahs of Baddowal, Basian, Jagraon, Jhandala, Ludhiana, Talwandi, with a net annual income of Rs. 60,000. The Bhattis dominated the Bhatinda-Sirsa region. Hence the Sikhs had to resort to the Lakhi Jungle lying between Firozpur and Bhatinda. There they experienced hard times owing to the scarcity of food and water. Then luckily for the Sikhs Nadir Shah invaded India.

During Nadir Shah's invasion

Nadir Shah was in Panjab and Delhi for five months from January to May, 1739. The administrative machinery had collapsed. The eye-witness Anand Ram Mukhlis of Lahore wrote :

"Cities like Wazirabad, Eminabad, Gujrat, etc., and big villages, each like half a city, were reduced to black ashes." Shaikh Ali Hazin was then travelling from Lahore to Sarhind. He wrote :

"The whole province was in complete revolution. Every person put forth his hand to plunder and pillage, and some thousands of robbers beset the public roads."

Kapur Singh led the Sikhs to seize this opportunity to gather booty and punish their enemies. Bakhtmal recorded that the Sikhs had blocked roads and pathways, and plundered large parts of the country. They built a small fort at Dallewal to store their booty. Kapur Singh kept himself engaged in organising small parties of the Sikhs. They punished such persons as used to report their whereabouts to the Government.

Changes in fortune

On the retirement of Nadir Shah, Zakariya Khan found the province in ruins. He razed the Sikh fort of Dallewal to the ground. Large number of Sikhs were executed at Shahid Ganj. They fled away from the Panjab and went to Malwa. According to Ratan Singh Bhangu[1] the Majha Sikhs were driven away by the Brars. In Sarhind region they seized many villages, and placed them under a man named Darānat Shah. Emperor Muhammad Shah sent Azimullah Khan to chastise the Sikhs. They were driven away into the Lakhi Jungle.

Zakariya Khan died on 1st July, 1745. He was succeeded by weaklings, Abdullah, Yahiya Khan and Shahnawaz. Thousands of young

[1]Op. cit., p. 267.

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Jats of the Majha being tempted by the easier pursuit of robbery than by their life of toil and tears on the land, became Sikhs. Kapur Singh divided them into twenty-five bands, each consisting of about one hundred young men under command of a leader. These bands were united not only by religious ties, but also by common interest. Therefore a system of general confederation for defence and offence came into existence.

The Small Carnage

In 1746 some Sikhs roaming about here and there murdered Jaspat Rae, in charge of Eminabad district. His brother, Lakhpat Rae, was the chief minister at Lahore. Lakhpat Rae vowed vengeance. With the approval of Yahiya Khan, he persecuted the Sikhs and massacred large numbers of them. The Sikhs called it Chhota Ghallughara or a small carnage. Kapur Singh led the survivors into Malwa.

Five months later Yahiya Khan's younger brother Shahnawaz Khan revolted against him. A civil war began which provided the Sikhs with an opportunity for gaining strength. They erected a mud fort called Ram Rauni at Amritsar.

Another important development took place in the political life of the Panjab. Nadir Shah was murdered in June, 1747. His general, Ahmad Abdali, assumed kingship of Afghanistan under the title of Ahmad Shah Durrani. He needed money to consolidate his position. For that purpose he invaded India in December, 1747. He was defeated by the Mughals near Sarhind and his victor, Muin-ul-Mulk, was appointed viceroy of the Panjab in March, 1748. The Durrani invasion and Muin's appointment deeply alarmed the Sikhs.

Foundation of the Dal Khalsa

Kapur Singh realized the delicacy of the time. He believed that Ahmad Shah Durrani, though defeated would repeat his exploits. The reason was that he could not establish himself in power in Afghanistan without money. It could not be raised there as the people were extremely poor, and would kill a man for the sake of a few paise. Money could be had only in India. He had seen with his own eyes the weakness of the Mughal Empire when he was in attendance upon Nadir Shah at Delhi. Secondly, Muin-ul-Mulk had the reputation of being a strict person given to discipline and authoritarianism.

As a safeguard against these two impending dangers, Kapur Singh, as a leader of the Sikhs, decided to establish close unity and cohesion

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among his men, under a younger and powerful leader, who would work according to his advice. The Baisakhi festival fell on March 29, 1748. Ahmad Shah Durrani had left Lahore a few days earlier, while Muin-ul-Mulk was to take charge at Lahore on 1st April, 1748. The Sikh leaders gathered at Amritsar with their bands whose number had grown to sixty-five.

At a solemn function before Akal Takht the entire fighting body of the Sikhs was given the name of Dal Khalsa. The sixty-five groups were leagued together in eleven misls. All the eleven misls were placed under one supreme command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The division of the Dal Khalsa into Budha Dal and Taruna Dal was retained to avoid any conflict between the younger captains and older leaders. The following misls were included in each Dal.

The Budha Dal: Ahluwalia, Dallewalia, Faizullahpuria, Karora-singhia, Nishanwala and Shahid.

The Taruna Dal: Bhangi, Kanhiya, Nakai, Ramgarhia and Sukarchakia.

Founder of the Singhpuria Misl

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Kapur Singh was one of eleven sardars of misls. He was called Faizullahpuria on account of his native village Faizullahpur. He renamed his misl Singhpuria. During Ahmad Shah Durrani's second invasion, December, 1749 to February, 1750, Muin-ul-Mulk had led his entire army to river Chenab where he held the invader at bay. Finding the capital defenceless, Kapur Singh guided the Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to attack Lahore. The town was plundered and its suburbs were burnt down. Kapur Singh took his seat on the platform of the Kotwali to control the city and secure its revenues. On the advance of Muin's force he retired from the capital.

In course of time Kapur Singh took possession of several villages, situated on both sides of river Satluj, in the parganahs of Fatahpur, Haibatpur, and Patti, worth two lakhs of rupees a year. Khushwaqt Rae says that Alha Singh of Patiala, Rae Ahmad of Jagraon and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia paid him a certain share out of their revenues. He commanded a force of 2,500 horsemen. It was one of the finest armed bands, noted for bravery and boldness, dash and daring. The leader and his men were all made of steel. "This force", says Latif, "though small, was the fiercest and most dreaded of all the Sikh soldiers."

A little before his death Kapur Singh made over the steel mace of

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Guru Gobind Singh to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in token of his headship of the Khalsa, and in obedience to the wishes of Mata Sundari. He died in October, 1753. His tomb stands near the temple of Baba Atal at Amritsar.

Kapur Singh's place in history

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Kapur Singh was the most powerful sardar, clear-sighted, doughty warrior, great organiser, eminent leader and statesmanlike. His services to the Panth in the darkest period of its history are unforgettable. He was noted for piety, humility, spirit of service and self-sacrifice. He organised langars or free messes, whenever possible. He firmly believed that *teg* succeeded when *deg* flourished. The Sikhs of his time looked upon him as the most venerable man. The new converts considered it a privilege and honour to be baptized by him. Alha Singh of Patiala, Bagh Singh, maternal uncle of Jassa Ahluwalia, and Jassa Singh received baptism from him, and as a mark of gratitude paid him tribute annually. His services in organising the Sikhs into a body, and keeping them united in harmony and discipline, inspired with hope, faith and confidence, are unique. He bore 43 scars on his body. He killed about five hundred Muslims with his own hands, converted numerous villages to Sikhism, consisting of all classes and castes. He punished a Sikh with hard labour if he spoke ill of any other Sikh.

Kapur Singh was noted for generosity. One day he was bathing at a well in village Faizullahpur. A mirāsi said if he were a real philanthropist, he should bestow on him so much wealth that he could not carry it. Kapur Singh granted him that well along with its adjoining land. Gian Singh says a mendicant demanded the hand of Nawab's wife. Kapur Singh offered her to him, but bought her by paying a certain sum. His slogan was that in Gurughar there always was Deg for friends and Teg for enemies.

Kapur Singh had five firsts to his credit. Firstly, he was the only Sikh to have the title of Nawab. Secondly, he was the initiator of dividing the Sikhs into two age groups, the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal, which division lasted for nearly a century. Thirdly, he was the founder of the Dal Khalsa in 1748. Fourthly, he was the first Sikh chief to control Lahore, the provincial capital, though only for a few days. Lastly, he was the first sardar to seize territory to the west of river Satluj after Banda Bahadur. He belonged to the following class of men :

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"The real men think and the real men do,
They dream great dreams which they make come out true;
The real men work, and the real men plan,
And helping themselves, they help their fellow men."

KHUSHHAL SINGH

Nawab Kapur Singh was succeeded by his son[1] Khushhal Singh. He was a powerful chief. He added a number of places and parganahs such as Bahrampur, Nurpur and Khaparkheri to his patrimony. After the death of Adina Beg Khan, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Khushhal Singh attacked his Diwan Bishambar Mal in 1759, and captured Mahangarwal, Jalandhar and Lamra. The Ahluwalia sardar allowed Khushhal Singh to make Jalandhar his capital out of regard for the late Nawab Kapur Singh. Khushhal Singh posted 150 horse and 50 foot at Marawali and 750 horse and 250 foot under Mahan Singh at Jalandhar. Maharaja Alha Singh continued paying him a part of his revenues as before. He captured the parganahs of Haibatpur and Patti from the Pathan chiefs of Kasur. He appointed his son Budh Singh in charge of these places. He built a fort there to control the lawless Dogars of the region. In January, 1764, at the Sikh conquest of Sarhind province, he acquired Bharatgarh, Bhareli, Chune Machhli, Ghanauli, Jhunga, Kandhaulah, and Manauli, worth one lakh and a half.

In December, 1766, Ahmad Shah Durrani was at Lahore. The Sikh sardars had taken up their positions at various places around the Shah's camp at a distance of about 20 kms. Khushhal Singh and Tara Singh Ghaiba with 6,000 horsemen were staying at Taragarh about 30 kms from the Durrani camp. They constantly harassed him. On January 15, 1767, Ahmad Shah was at Kot Nur-ud-din. He wrote letters to Khushhal Singh and other sardars either to submit and accept jagirs from him, or fight in the open, and not in the methods of guerilla warfare.

Khushhal Singh and Raja Amar Singh seized Chhat and Banur (23 villages) from the Nawab of Raekot. They remained in their joint control for some years and then they were divided between themselves. Chhat fell to the share of Khushhal Singh and Banur to that

[1]Gian Singh says that Khushhal Singh was the nephew of Kapur Singh and son of his brother Dan Singh. Syed Muhammad Latif and Griffin follow him. Khushwaqt Rae who was his contemporary calls him his son. (Bad az art-hāl-e-o-Khushhal Singh pisrash riyasat yāft.) Ramjas Diwan agrees with him.

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of Amar Singh. Banur was defended by two forts, one of which was called Zulumgarh. Hari Singh of Rupar had seized ten villages of Khushhal Singh, three parganahs of Nalagarh State and two parganahs of Bilaspur State. These Rajas invited Khushhal Singh to join them in recovering their territories. A battle was fought at Golewala, and all the three parties recovered their lost territories. The Rajas agreed to pay tribute to Hari Singh. Khushhal Singh built a Katra at Amritsar called Katra Faizullahpurian.

Relations with Patiala

During Abdul Ahad's campaign against Patiala in 1779, Khushhal Singh helped Amar Singh. Amicable relations continued for some time more. A quarrel arose in 1786 between Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala and his Bakhshi or the commander of Patiala troops. Sahib Singh was a child, 10 years old. He insisted on the roll-call of troops. The Bakhshi replied there was no need. The child got angry and used harsh words. The Bakhshi slapped him. He went weeping to his mother. The Rani put the Bakhshi in confinement. The Bakhshi's relatives held four large forts which they handed over to Baghel Singh Karorasinghia and Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya. The Rani invited Jai Singh Kanhiya for help. Sahib Singh's sister, Sahib Kaur, was married to Jaimal Singh son of Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya, a cousin of Jai Singh Kanhiya. The Bakhshi's relatives invited Khushhal Singh Singhpuria to ravage Patiala territory.

Khushhal Singh seized Banur and laid waste many other villages. The Rani ordered Diwan Nanun Mal to expel Khushhal Singh. The Diwan invited Dhar Rao Maratha to drive away Khushhal Singh, and restore his authority over Chhat and Banur. Nanun Mal offered the Maratha chief three lakhs of rupees and Rs. 5,000 per day for his expenses with free supply of ammunition. Dhar Rao recovered the forts from Baghel Singh and Rae Singh. In the battle of Banur Khushhal Singh was repulsed and he retired to Jalandhar. Nanun Mal gratefully paid Dhar Rao a sum of five lakhs of rupees and the Maratha chief returned to Karnal. Khushhal Singh died in 1795.

Budh Singh

Khushhal Singh had two sons, Budh Singh and Sudh Singh. The latter was son-in-law of Lahna Singh Bhangi of Lahore. He died one year before his father in 1794. Budh Singh succeeded him. Nur-ud-din, the officer of Taran Taran, had removed the bricks from the

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holy tank of Taran Taran, and had used them in the construction of his own mansion. Budh Singh demolished the house and used the bricks again in the repair of the tank. He spent one lakh of rupees in repairing the tank and the gurdwara. He built a masonry fort at Jalandhar. Its site is now occupied by Qila Mohalla. Budh Singh inherited territories in the Bari Doab worth two lakhs a year, in the Jalandhar Doab worth one lakh, and in Sarhind province worth one lakh and a half.

Extinction of the Misl

In 1804 Maharaja Ranjit Singh captured all the possessions of Singhpuria misl situated in the Bari Doab, including Katra Kapur Singh or Katra Faizullahpurian at Amritsar, and Budh Singh's movable property consisting of elephants, horses, tents, jewellery, etc. In order to save his remaining property and territory Budh Singh took up service under the Maharaja. During his Cis-Satluj campaigns, Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted to Budh Singh the parganah of Awankot worth Rs. 54,000 a year. Another member of this misl, Garbha Singh received Bharatgarh fetching revenues to the value of Rs. 53,200. He served in the campaigns of Kasur, Jhang and Multan.

In 1814 Maharaja Ranjit Singh invited Sikh sardars including Budh Singh to join him with their troops for conquering Kashmir. Budh Singh neither joined nor sent any troops. Further he did not obey the Maharaja implicitly, nor did he pay him full respect. Ranjit Singh was on the lookout for an opportunity to seize his territory in the Jalandhar Doab. Budh Singh used to dye his beard. In a public durbar in 1811 Ranjit Singh enquired what punishment should be given to a Sikh for dyeing his beard. Giani sant Singh, Bhai Ram Singh and Bhai Basti Ram replied that he should be imprisoned. Budh Singh was present in Lahore. He fled away in the night and escaped to Ludhiana in British territory to the great delight of Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja appointed Nur-ud-din, brother of Faqir Aziz-ud-din, governor of the Jalandhar Doab. He confiscated all his movable property and all the territories situated to the west of river Satluj worth three lakhs a year. Thus the Singhpuria misl was wiped out.

His possessions in the Cis-Satluj region lay in the north-western corner of Ambala district on the bend of the Satluj from near Kiratpur to Machhiwara and other places in Ambala district. He established his headquarters at Manauli. Budh Singh died in 1816.

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Budh Singh left behind seven sons. The eldest resided at Manauli. The others settled at Akalgarh, Bharatgarh, Bhareli, Bunga, Ghanauli and Kandhaulah. Akalgarh, Bunga, Kandhaulah and Manauli lapsed to the British dominions one by one for failure of male issues. Only Bharatgarh, Bhareli and Ghanauli survived.

Parganahs in the Jalandhar Doab and their incomes

1. Fatahabad	Rs.	65,314
2. Jalandhar	Rs.	4,75,504
3. Sohadri	Rs.	24,045
Total	Rs.	5,64,863

Territories

The territories of Faizullahpuria or Singhpuria misl were situated in the district of Jalandhar and some in Ludhiana, and in the north-western part of Ambala district. The headquarters of this misl were at first at Faizullahpur or Singhpur and later at Jalandhar.

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Cis-Satluj region

Akalgarh, Awankot, Bahrampur, Bharatgarh, Bhareli, Binewal, Ghanauli, Janoli, Kandhaulah, Kanoli, Lamra, Machholi, Manauli.

Jalandhar Doab

It consisted of southern part of the Jalandhar district and some places in the south-east of Hoshiarpur district.

Bari Doab

Faizullahpur renamed Singhpur, Haibatpur, Khaparkheri, Patti. All were worth six lakhs a year.

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CHAPTER 5

The Karorasinghia Misl

Sham Singh Dhillon

Sham Singh, a Dhillon Jat of village Narli, commanded a Sikh band in the Budha Dal in 1734. He was killed during Nadir Shah's invasion. His associate Karam Singh Uppal Khatri of village Paijgarh[1] actually Faizgarh succeeded him. He lost his life during Ahmad Shah Durrani's first invasion in January, 1748. This band was called Paijgarhia.

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Karora Singh

At the time of the formation of the Dal Khalsa in March, 1748, Karora Singh, a Virk Jat of village Barki in the district of Lahore, was the head of the misl. It was called after his name Karorasinghia misl. About twenty years earlier Karora Singh had been forcibly converted to Islam by Zakariya Khan's officials. After six months he again took pahul from Darbara Singh and reverted to Sikhism. Since then he became a determined foe of the Mughal government.

Karora Singh generally confined his activities to the tract lying south of the Kangra hills in Hoshiarpur district. In an emergency he could seek shelter in the hills. In 1759 after the death of Adina Beg Khan and by killing his Diwan Bishambar Mal, he seized Hoshiarpur, Hariana, Sham Chaurasi (84 villages), all the four Basis, Shamsabad, Banbeli, Bahadurpur and the Talwan territory.

The Talwan territory extended from the Ghorewaha in the east to Shahkot in the west. In the north the Bein river and Ghurka were its limits. The Satluj bounded it on the south. It contained 360 villages. Talwan was then held by Mahmud Khan, a Manj Rajput. He possessed a few hundred troopers of his own, but he considered it advisable

[1]Raghubir Varma calls it Fatahgarh.

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to submit before the rising tide of Sikh power. He took protection of Karora Singh. The Talwan territory was shut in on one side by that of the sardars of Nurmahal. They were subordinate to the Ahluwalia Misl. On the other side it had branches of the Dallewalia Misl under Tara Singh Ghaiba. Karora Singh was killed in the battle of Taraori in 1761 against the Nawab of Kunjpura.

Baghel Singh Dhaliwal

Karora Singh had no son. He had adopted his own personal servant Baghel Singh. He succeeded to the headship of the misl. Baghel Singh Dhaliwal belonged to village Chubhal, 21 kms from Amritsar. He grew into the most powerful Sikh leader in the Cis-Satluj region. He dominated the Sikh politics in this area in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Baghel Singh had seen the rotten condition of the Mughal Empire. His aim was to establish Sikh rule over the Mughal Empire under the nominal suzerainty of Emperor Shah Alam II. The Emperor was inclined to appoint him Regent of the Empire. Had he accepted this position, the Sikh rule would have extended upto the Ganga as far south as Mughal Sarai, Bundelkhand, Rajasthan and Sind. He was endowed with the ability and capacity to play a major role in building up the political power of the Sikhs over the whole of northern India. As he had risen from extreme poverty and penury, and from the position of a domestic servant, the Sikhs would not have supported him against Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in such an ambitious scheme. It was with this idea that he persuaded the Sikhs to enter the Red Fort and seated Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the throne. Baghel Singh remained in charge of the Capital for the sole purpose of building seven Gurdwaras.

Acquisition of territories

After the death of Adina Beg Khan in September, 1758, and during Ahmad Shah Durrani's invasion against the Marathas in 1759-61, the Sikh sardars were acquiring lands and were setting themselves up as territorial chieftains. Baghel Singh obtained possession of a large part of Hoshiarpur district, and nearly one-fourth of the Jalandhar Doab He fixed his headquarters at Hariana, 12 kms west of Hoshiarpur. He entrusted the conduct of affairs to his wife Rup Kanwar who managed the administration very well. At the partition of Sarhind province in January, 1764, Baghel Singh occupied Chhalondi, Jamait-

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garh, Khurdin and Kinori. He established his second headquarters at Chhalondi, 30 kms from Karnal on the road to Jagadhri. The administration of this area was given to his second wife Ram Kanwar who proved a wise ruler. Baghel Singh's third wife Ratan Kaur controlled Kalawar. Baghel Singh kept himself engaged in outside activities.

In 1775 Baghel Singh acquired Zahura on river Beas. In 1792 he seized from Bhangis three parganahs of Taran Taran, Sobraon and Sirhali. Gulab Singh Bhangi could not face Baghel Singh in the field. He engaged a Brahman to get Baghel Singh killed through magic and sorcery, but the experiment proved ineffective.

In the Ganga Doab

After the conquest of the Sarhind province, the Taruna Dal had returned to West Panjab, while the Budha Dal in a body of 40,000 strong poured into the upper Ganga Doab under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Baghel Singh Dhaliwal. The town of Saharanpur was sacked on February 20, 1764. The districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Mirath were ravaged. They crossed the Ganga into Rohilkhand, and plundered Najibabad, Moradabad and Anupshahar in about two months. Najib-ud-daulah, the Dictator of Delhi from 1761 to 1770, could not face the onslaught of the Sikhs. Considering discretion as the better part of valour and adopting the policy of expediency, he saved his estates by paying a blackmail of eleven lakhs of rupees to the Sikhs.

In 1775 the Sikhs gathered their forces near Karnal. They organised themselves into three divisions, each under the leadership of Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya, Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia of Rahon and Baghel Singh Karorasinghia. They crossed the Jamuna near Kunjpura on April 22, 1775. Lakhnauti, Gangoh, Ambehta, Nanautah and Deoband fell an easy victim. Zabita Khan saved his capital Ghausgarh by flattery and bribe of Rs. 50,000. The Sikhs forced him to accompany them. The Bārah Sādāt villages, Shamli, Kairanah, Kandhla and Mirath were squeezed. They advanced as far as Khurja. While returning they destroyed Paharganj and Jaisinghpura at Delhi on July 15, 1775. They crossed the river Jamuna back home on July 24, 1775.

On March 11, 1776, another Sikh force under several leaders including Baghel Singh fell upon Mirath district. The imperial commander Abul Qasim, brother of deputy prime minister Abdul Ahad

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Khan was killed while fighting against them at Amirnagar, 13 kms west of Muzaffarnagar.

Trickery during Abdul Ahad's campaign, 1779

Abdul Ahad Khan, the deputy prime minister of the Mughal Empire, led an expedition against the Cis-Satluj Sikhs to realize tribute in 1779. He left Delhi on 18 June in the company of Emperor Shah Alam's second son Prince Mirza Jahan Shah Farkhundah Bakht. At Karnal many Sikh chiefs including Baghel Singh waited upon the Nawab. Baghel Singh bore long-standing enmity to Gajpat Singh of Jind. He advised the Nawab to demand a heavy tribute from the Raja, and in case of delay imprison him. Gajpat Singh secured his liberty by promising to pay two lakhs of rupees.

Baghel Singh then goaded the Nawab to ask for a large sum from Desu Singh of Kaithal. On September 9, 1779, Abdul Ahad sent Baghel Singh and others to bring Desu Singh from Kaithal to his camp at Thanesar. Desu Singh begged that his territories seized by Raja Amar Singh of Patiala should be restored to him. Abdul Ahad demanded a tribute of three lakhs. Desu Singh offered two lakhs. Abdul Ahad imprisoned him along with eight of his companions. He was set free after receiving four lakhs of rupees. One-fourth was paid to Baghel Singh and other Sikh chiefs as their share for mediation.

On September 26, 1779, Abdul Ahad was at Ghuram, 25 kms south of Patiala. In spite of many a summon Raja Amar Singh had evaded compliance. The Nawab called Baghel Singh in his tent and talked to him for a long time regarding Amar Singh's tribute. On 29 September the Nawab sent Baghel Singh to Patiala to bring Amar Singh to his camp. Amar Singh invited assistance from Majha Sikhs. Baghel Singh told the Nawab that the Majha Sikh chiefs were coming to help Amar Singh who was not willing to attend upon him. He frightened the Nawab, and as a measure of safety suggested that the Trans-Satluj Sikh chiefs should be bribed and the Nawab should escape to Delhi. Some Majha chiefs had just arrived at Patiala. The Nawab gave Baghel Singh three lakhs of rupees realized from Desu Singh. Baghel Singh paid three-fourths to the Majha sardars, and kept the balance for himself. The Nawab retreated on 14 October and reached Panipat on 18 October. He was frequently attacked by the Cis-Satluj Sikhs already present in his camp, and most of his luggage and equipment were plundered by them. Baghel Singh did not join in the loot as he had already secured the lion's share.

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Intestine warfare among the Sikhs, 1780

In 1780 all the Sikh chiefs of the Cis-Satluj region were fighting among themselves. On September 15, 1780, it was reported that Baghel Singh and Dulha or Dulcha Singh of Radaur with 6,000 horse were fighting against Diwan Singh Lang of Sikandra, who sought help from the Delhi Wazir Najaf Khan. Bhag Singh of Buriya, Bhanga Singh of Thanesar and Sahib Singh Khondah joined Diwan Singh with 4,000 troops. On 18 September they lay encamped at Mustafabad. The opposing party consisting of Baghel Singh, Sada Singh, Dulha or Dulcha Singh, Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad, Karam Singh Shahid, Gurbakhsh Singh and Lal Singh with 6,800 horse stayed in a nearby village Hakimānwālā. Frequent skirmishes took place between them.

Dispute with Raja Amar Singh of Patiala, 1780

Raja Amar Singh of Patiala took advantage of the mutual warfare among the Sikhs. He seized various villages of Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. Baghel Singh lost a number of villages such as Bhuni, Lalru and Mullanpur. Baghel Singh with other Sikh sardars got ready to retaliate. Amar Singh was joined by several other sardars and the Raja of Nahan. A battle was fought at Ghuram, 25 kms south of Patiala. The result was indecisive. A contingent of Baghel Singh attacked Patiala city. He was driven back by the fire of guns mounted on the walls of the fort. Baghel Singh left Patiala, and began to ravage and lay waste its countryside. Amar Singh decided to make peace. His vakil, Chain Singh, held the reins of Baghel Singh's horse, and said :

"Singh Ji! Please do not ruin a servant of Gurughar." Amar Singh visited Baghel Singh in his camp at Lahal village. As secretly planned Amar Singh's young son, Sahib Singh, came to salute Baghel Singh. Baghel Singh took the five-year-old child in his lap, and caressed him. At Amar Singh's request, the child was baptised by Baghel Singh who now became his protector.

Imperial campaign against the Cis-Satluj Sikhs, 1781

The civil war among the Sikhs tempted the Mughal court to recover the crownlands and realize tributes from the Sikhs by playing off one party against the other. The Delhi Wazir Mirza Najaf Khan deputed his grand-nephew Mirza Shafi to carry on a campaign against the Sikhs. He was given a select force of 10,000 and a strong

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park of artillery. On 25 February, 1781, Shafi lay encamped at Radaur 43 kms north of Karnal. The Sikhs were staying 13 km distant. Baghel Singh wrote a letter to Shafi on 27 February saying that as owing to his presence in that quarter, crops were being ruined, he would be held responsible for their loss. On 23 March Baghel Singh's son marched from Sikandra and tried to recapture Mustafabad, but he failed in the attempt and returned. On 4 April Shafi expelled Baghel Singh's military post from Indri 10 kms south of Ladwa. The Sikhs leaving their horses in the jungle fought on foot. Just then 3,000 Afghans with guns joined Shafi from Karnal and Kunjpura. The Sikhs left 150 men dead, while Shafi lost 30 men in killed and 50 wounded. The Sikhs retired to Radaur. On April 27 Shafi realized a fine of Rs. 7,000 from Indri. Baghel Singh retaliated by attacking Khalil Beg Khan at Shahabad. He took a defensive position under the walls of the sarae outside the town. The sarae was besieged and the Sikhs fired at it from the roofs of neighbouring houses. On 22 May Khalil Beg surrendered with 300 horse, 800 foot and two pieces of cannon. Khalil Beg was shot dead. Afterwards Baghel Singh and other Sikhs attacked Shafi's camp, and forced him to retreat to Kunjpura.

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Expedition to Farrukhabad, 1783

The Budha Dal numbering about 60,000 under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Baghel Singh Dhaliwal marched towards Delhi in February, 1783. At this time the whole northern India was in the grip of one of the severest famines called Chālisa. They commenced their depredations at Ghaziabad, 20 kms south of Delhi. This place was thoroughly plundered. Bulandshahar, 50 kms from Delhi, was attacked next. Khurja, 33 kms farther south, a famous market for grain and ghi, was completely sacked. Gian Singh[1] writes:

"When the Sikhs entered this town, the people fled away. The Sikhs caught the rich men of the place, tied them to pillars and by severely beating them compelled them to disclose the places of their hidden treasures. When the Sikhs had looted the town, Baghel Singh and Jassa Singh spread a cloth, and asked the chiefs to give away one tenth of their booty in cash for the service of the Guru. The sum collected amounted to one lakh of rupees. The money was spent on Hari Mandar at Amritsar."

Now they advanced farther south. Aligarh 126 kms from Delhi,

[1]*Panth Prakash*, p. 912.

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Hathras 156 kms, Tundla 204 kms, Shikohabad 241 kms, were all looted. Farrukhabad 107 kms from Shikohabad was reached in a dash. The palace of the Nawab was ransacked. The town was given over to pillage. Large quantities of gold, ornaments, diamonds, pearls, including the Nawab's golden huqqa and a stick studded with diamonds fell into Baghel Singh's hands.[1]

Domination of imperial capital for nine months, 1783

From Farrukhabad the Sikhs rushed back homeward. They arrived at Delhi on 8 March, 1783. The enormous booty acquired during this expedition was sent to their homes under the custody of 10,000 men. A strong body of 50,000 men remained at Delhi. They were again divided into two groups, each under Baghel Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Baghel Singh's troops, numbering 30,000 encamped at a place now called Tis Hazari. On that very day they plundered Malka Ganj, Sabzi Mandi and Mughalpura. On 9 March, 1783, Pahari Dhiraj was attacked. In an engagement the son of Rao Dhiraj Ram was killed. Jassa Singh broke through Ajmeri Gate, and ravaged Hauz Qazi. The inhabitants fled into the Red Fort for shelter. The Emperor invited Begam Samru for help from Sardhana in Mirath district. The Sikhs continued plundering the other parts of the city. The booty was deposited at Majnun ka Tila.

Just at this time Jassa Singh Ramgarhia arrived at Delhi from Hisar at the head of 10,000 troops. He had been driven out of the Panjab by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and others. After devastating the walled city and its suburbs, the Sikhs on 12 March, 1783 turned to the Red Fort to seize the property of the refugees who had taken shelter there. They stopped before Diwan-e-Am. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's force of 20,000 desired to place their leader on the throne. He was led inside, seated on the throne, and was loudly proclaimed as Badshah Singh. By this time Jassa Singh Ramgarhia arrived on the scene. He demanded immediate withdrawal of the Ahluwalia chief from Diwan-e-Am. Both sides drew out their swords. Ahluwalia at once got down the throne and ordered his men to vacate the fort. All retired to their respective camps.

The same day Begam Samru reached Delhi. She had friendly

[1]Most of these articles were taken possession of by the British government for failure of a male heir to Baghel Singh on the death of Baghel Singh's widow, Ram Kanwar, in 1820.

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relations with Baghel Singh who had saved her during a Sikh incursion of Mirath district. The Emperor gave her full authority to settle terms with the Sikhs in order to save the city from further misery and misfortune. She called on Baghel Singh in his camp at Tis Hazāri. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had declined to represent the Budha Dal. This authority was assigned to Baghel Singh by both the Jassa Singhs. The following terms were settled between her and Baghel Singh, and were approved by the Emperor:

1. The Dal Khalsa should retire from Delhi immediately.
2. Baghel Singh would stay in the capital with his own 4,000 troops.
3. He would be responsible for maintaining law and order in the city.
4. He would establish his camp in Sabzi Mandi (old site).
5. The Sikhs would not misbehave in any way during their stay in the capital.
6. Baghel Singh would charge six annas in the rupee (37.5%) of all the octroi duties in Delhi to meet the expenses for preserving peace.
7. Baghel Singh was allowed to build seven gurdwaras at the sacred places of the Sikhs.
8. The construction of gurdwaras was to be finished within a year at the most.

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In consequence most of the Sikhs left Delhi. Only Baghel Singh, Khushhal Singh Singhpuria, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Karam Singh Nirmala, Bhag Singh of Thanesar and Sahib Singh Khondah, at the head of 10,000 horsemen stayed behind. They fixed their camp in Sabzi Mandi—Tis Hazari area.

Baghel Singh took charge of octroi posts as well as the kotwali in Chandni Chauk. Five-eighths of the whole collection was daily deposited in the government treasury.

Warren Hastings, the governor-general, recorded in a minute presented to his council :

"While I was at Lucknow, they (*Sikhs*) carried their depredations to the very suburbs of Delhi, where two of their officers actually reside in a quarter called Subzee Mundee, which is chiefly occupied by shroffs and shopkeepers, for the double purpose of levying their rauky (which is the name given to that species of contribution) and of protecting the inhabitants from the marauders of their own nation."

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The first gurdwara was built at Teliwara in memory of Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi, wives of Guru Gobind Singh. They had lived there for a time. The second gurdwara was erected in Jaisinghpura where Guru Hari Krishan had stayed. Four tombs were constructed on the bank of the Jamuna at the places of cremation of Guru Hari Krishan, Mata Sundari, Mata Sahib Devi, and Ajit Singh, the adopted son of Mata Sundari. A gurdwara was constructed there. There were two places connected with Guru Tegh Bahadur. One was at the Kotwali where the Guru was beheaded. The other was at Rikabganj where his headless body was cremated by Lakhi Banjara. At both these places mosques had been built. In order to build gurdwaras mosques had to be demolished.

The Indian Muslims have been most sensitive with regard to their mosques. But their fanaticism had grown weaker before the supremacy of the Sikhs. Earlier a small body of Sikhs under Sahib Singh Khondah, a petty Sikh chief, visited Delhi. He was there on October 1, 1778. "This was the Dasahra day and the Sikhs riding out went to the Guru's bungalow near Rikab Ganj, and there demolished a mosque and ravaged the cultivated fields."[1]

The diarist further observed: Jahād in the path of Allah taught the Sikhs Jahad in the path of the Guru. On the departures of the Sikhs, the Muslims erected a mosque again.

When Baghel Singh planned to pull down the mosque, the Muslims of the capital grew furious, and thousands of them gathered there to save the mosque. Baghel Singh asked the mob to send their representatives to discuss the matter with him. About one hundred Muslim leaders met him. He gave them a fortnight to declare their final decision. Till then the construction was stopped. He sent his agents to all the Cis-Satluj chiefs to be ready for an expedition, the details of which he would supply in a couple of days. He prepared a list of all the jagirs held by the Delhi Muslims in the Ganga Doab and in the region north of Delhi in the districts of Rohtak and Karnal. He marked certain sardars for certain areas. They entered those villages and created a havoc. The leaders finding themselves in ruin waited on Baghel Singh individually and gave him in writing that they had no objection to the demolition of the mosque. A body of 2,000 Sikhs in one night wiped out the mosque at Rikabganj and laid the foundation of the gurdwara before sunrise. The building was soon raised.

At the Kotwali a huge Muslim mob gathered to protect the mosque

[1]Delhi Diarist, anonymous, in *Delhi Chronicle*, 311.

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from demolition. The situation was grave. Baghel Singh did not touch the mosque,[1] and pulled down only a portion of the compound wall which obstructed the construction of the gurdwara. On its completion a Brahman Sikh was appointed Granthi, and a jagir was assigned to it.[2]

The sixth gurdwara was constructed at Majnun ka Tila where Guru Nanak with Mardana, Guru Hargobind and Ram Rae son of Guru Hari Rae had stayed. The seventh gurdwara was raised in Moti Bagh where Guru Gobind Singh had lived.

All these seven gurdwaras were constructed in eight months. The Emperor was pleased with his work. He granted him one-eighth of the Octroi duties of Delhi for life. Baghel Singh left Delhi in the beginning of December, 1783. The contemporary Khair-ud-din, secretary to a royal prince, calls him Raja.

British negotiations with Baghel Singh, 1783

The Sikh domination of Delhi and the Ganga Doab deeply alarmed the British Government. Their authority extended upto the eastern bank of river Ganga. Warren Hastings, the governor-general, was now keen to occupy Delhi and Agra and to make the British government successor of the Mughal Empire. His plan was upset by the Sikhs. He wanted to deal with the Sikhs by studying their past history. For this purpose he sent George Forster to travel in the Sikh country and write their history in 1782. He employed Sayyid Ghulam Husain to write a history of India with special reference to the Sikhs. At the same time he deputed James Browne to Agra and Delhi. His business was to turn away the Sikhs from Delhi and the Ganga Doab by negotiations as well as by organising a confederacy against them. Browne reached Agra in February, 1783, and shortly afterwards opened correspondence with Baghel Singh. The sardar did not wish to divert his attention from the construction of gurdwaras. He directed his vakil Lakhpat Rae who represented him at the Mughal court to reply to Browne's letters. Lakhpat Rae suggested to Browne to correspond with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who was the highest authority among the Sikhs and who was called "Badshah Singh." Browne wrote several letters to Baghel Singh and in December, 1783,

[1]In the revolt of 1857, the Sikhs in general and Raja Sarup Singh of Jind in particular had rendered most valuable help to the British Government. The government allowed Sarup Singh to demolish the mosque and extend the gurdwara in its place. (Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalse* (Gurmukhi), III, 577.)

[2]ibid.

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came to Delhi. Baghel Singh had left the capital a few days before Browne's arrival.

Before appointing Mahadji Sindhia Regent in December, 1784, the Emperor had in his mind to bestow this office on Baghel Singh. From the Emperor's point of view this was the best solution to save crown-lands from Sikh depredations, and to subdue the rebel chiefs with Sikh help. It was for this reason that the Emperor had granted him a share in the revenues of the capital for life. Warren Hastings came from Calcutta to Lucknow to bring the Emperor's design to naught. His plan to replace the Emperor by his rebel son Prince Jahandar Shah failed. Baghel Singh did not take advantage of this situation.

Sack of Chandausi, 1785

In the beginning of 1785, a large horde of the Sikhs numbering about 30,000 under the leadership of Baghel Singh and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia swept over the upper Ganga Doab. They crossed the Ganga and entered Rohilkhand which though a part of Oudh was under the British protection. On 13 January, 1785, the two Sayyid villages of Barsi and Mahmudpur were razed to the ground. Then they decided to plunder Moradabad on 14 January. It was Friday, when all the Muslims would gather in large numbers. It was reported that the richest town in the area was Chandausi, 44 kms from Moradabad. It was a great trade mart where more than 2,000 bankers and merchants carried on business transactions for crores of rupees. The Sikhs turned towards it. Chandausi was thoroughly squeezed for two days on 14 and 15 January, and booty worth nearly a crore of rupees was acquired. George Forster, an eye-witness recorded : "The Sicque forces assembled again in the beginning of the year 1785, when they entered the province of Rohilcund, and having laid it waste for the space of one hundred miles they returned unmolested." Hamilton wrote : "This predatory incursion gave the coup-de-grace to the trade of Rohilcund, as thenceforward no man would venture his property in a country equally destitute of protection, from arbitrary exactions within and plundering adventurers from without."

Treaty with Mahadji Sindhia, 1785

Mahadji Sindhia had been appointed Regent of the Mughal Empire by Emperor Shah Alam II. He wished to stop Sikh raids into the Ganga Doab and the Delhi region. His agent Ambaji Ingle formed a treaty with Baghel Singh and other Sikh sardars on 30 March, 1785.

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It was ratified by Sindhia on 9 May, 1785. By it the Sikhs agreed not to levy any exactions on the crownlands, and the Marathas would pay them one-third of the revenues realized from their *pattis* or tracts which owed them allegiance. The Sikhs did not keep their promise, and continued their raids as before.

In June, 1787, Ingle led an expedition into the Cis-Satluj region. Baghel Singh who had been given parganahs worth four lakhs a year joined Ingle with 1,000 horse. At that time Mahadji was waging a war against Jaipur. An agent of the Raja of Jaipur visited Baghel Singh at Thanesar with offers of money. Baghel Singh took the money and persuaded Ingle to retire, and escorted him in his return journey.

The Emperor in vain seeks Baghel Singh's help, 1787

In August, 1787, Ghulam Qadir attacked Delhi. He was joined by several Sikh chiefs. Emperor Shah Alam had great faith in Baghel Singh. He wrote several letters to Baghel Singh for help on August, 25, 30 and 31. On 31 August, the Emperor said to Rormal, vakil of Baghel Singh at the Mughal court : "Write to Baghel Singh to seize all the territories of Ghulam Qadir, as we have appointed him our agent of that country." The Emperor wrote again on Ist September. On that day Rormal secured a royal rescript in favour of his master for capturing Ghulam Qadir's territories. Baghel Singh and Begam Samru came to Delhi. Ghulam Qadir tried his level best to win over the Begam to his side. The Begam disdainfully rejected his offer saying that she would never betray the Emperor. But Baghel Singh had no scruples to desert the Emperor's side, and joined Ghulam Qadir. Only Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, the most frightful Sikh sardar, stood by the Emperor, and worked in collaboration with Begam Samru. Ghulam Qadir committed terrible atrocities on the royal family. On 10 August, 1788, he threw the Emperor on the ground, sat on his breast, and took out his eyes with a dagger. The princes and princesses were kept standing in the sun and tortured. Ladies were stripped naked and raped.

The Maratha campaigns

Mahadji Sindhia deputed in 1788 Rane Khan and Ali Bahadur to realize tribute from Sikh chiefs. When they reached Batras village near Karnal, Baghel Singh joined them. In April, 1789, Mahadji granted a large jagir to Baghel Singh in order to restrain his associate Sikh chiefs from plundering imperial territories, and to keep them in

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amity with the Marathas.

Dhar Rao led an expedition in 1789 into the Cis-Satluj region. Baghel Singh immediately joined him. The Maratha sardar made for Patiala. He was promised two lakhs of rupees by Diwan Nanun Mal of Patiala if he would help in recovering the Patiala territory seized by its neighbours. The territories were recovered from the chiefs of Kaithal and Jalandhar. Baghel Singh received his share from both sides.

The campaign of Anta Rao and Lachhman Rao took place in 1794. Baghel Singh became their guide. The chiefs of Jind, Kaithal, Thanesar and Radaur submitted. All of them advanced to Patiala. From Trans-Satluj area Tara Singh Ghaiba came to help Patiala. A battle was fought at Murdanpur near Ambala. The Marathas were forced to retreat to Karnal.

George Thomas and Perron

In 1797, George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, appeared near Delhi. He commanded eight regiments of infantry, one thousand horse and fifty guns. He established himself at Hansi as the Raja of Haryana. The Sikhs were afraid of him. Meanwhile Perron, a French general, captured Delhi for his master Daulat Rao Sindhia. Baghel Singh and other Sikhs of the Sarhind province joined Perron against George Thomas, who was defeated and expelled.

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Baghel Singh's death, character and achievements

Raghubir Verma says Baghel Singh died in 1800 at Amritsar. Gian Singh places his death in 1802. Sir Lepel Griffin[1] states that Baghel Singh and Bhag Singh of Jind joined the British army with their contingents in January, 1805. Baghel Singh seems to have died either at the close of 1805 or in the beginning of 1806. He commanded a force of two to four thousand men in the Cis-Satluj and 750 horse and 250 foot at Hariana in the Jalandhar Doab. His country yielded about nine lakhs annually.

In person he was tall, well-built, with cat-like brownish eyes, and slightly blackish colour. He was brave, fearless, wise and diplomatic. Of all the Sikh leaders both in Malwa and Majha, he was the most successful negotiator. Whenever the Cis-Satluj region was invaded by the Mughals or Marathas, he invariably joined the invader, and became his guide. He secured one-fourth of the tributes received by the

[1] *Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 321.

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victors and one-fourth from the vanquishers, and retaining full confidence of both the parties.

Though he was a rich man, possessing about a crore worth of cash and property, yet he remained a humble servant of the Guru. Among all the Sikh sardars he alone could build the seven gurdwaras at Delhi. This was due to his influence with the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, friendly relations with Begam Samru who was in full confidence of the Emperor, his impartial and sympathetic treatment of the people of Delhi during his nine months' control of the capital, and his diplomacy of securing the approval of the Muslim leaders for the demolition of the mosque. This service was unique for the Panth.

Had he been loyal to the Emperor and to the Sikh sardars, he could have become regent or at least the deputy-regent under Mahadji Sindhia. Both the Emperor and the Regent were prepared to win him over. He did not avail himself of such an opportunity on account of his humble origin, and for fear of annoying the all-powerful Ahluwalia sardar. Had he dared to play high stakes, he might have won the support of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. But he had no spirit to go against the head of the Dal Khalsa. That is why he suggested to James Browne to correspond with the Ahluwalia sardar. He had a greater chance after Jassa Singh's death in October, 1783. The Sikh ban of serving under a Muslim stood in the way. Besides he had lost his only son in 1781, and had no ambition for wielding higher political power. He had adopted a young man named Sukhu Singh as a son, and had given him charge of his three parganahs in the Bari Doab. He was at Amritsar during Shah Zaman's lost invasion in December, 1798.

Baghel Singh's parganahs of Sirhali, Sobraon and Taran Taran in Bari Doab were annexed immediately after his death by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Baghel Singh's one wife, Rup Kanwar, was at Hariana near Hoshiarpur. She managed her Trans-Satluj estates even during the lifetime of her husband. She was assisted by Baghel Singh's sister's son Mohar Singh. He died some time afterwards. Baghel Singh then appointed his wife's brother. He also passed away soon. In 1806 Ranjit Singh seized Rup Kanwar's entire territory and property, including elephants, horses and household goods. The parganah of Shām Chaurāsi containing 84 villages was given to Jodh Singh Kalsia. Baghel Singh's second wife, Ram Kanwar, ruled at Chhalondi. His third wife Ratan Kaur possessed Kalāwar. In his first expedition into the Cis-Satluj country in 1806, Maharaja Ranjit Singh

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deprived them of most of their estates in Karnal district. The parganahs of Chhalondi and Khurdin were given to Jodh Singh Kalsia, a prominent member of Karorasinghia misl. Bahlolpur was assigned to his Kārdār Vir Bhan. Only one village was left with Ram Kanwar. In 1808, the Maharaja seized Kalāwar including the entire cash amounting to twenty-four lakhs and four guns. The two widows were allowed to live in their own houses with two villages in jagir. After the treaty of Amritsar in 1809 Ram Kanwar went to Ludhiana and pleaded her case with Ochterlony. The Colonel restored their territory by taking it from Jodh Singh and Vir Bhan. Hari Singh, son of Jodh Singh Kalsia, began to trouble them. Ram Kanwar again went to Ludhiana in March, 1813, and lodged a complaint with Ochterlony. Hari Singh was given a warning, and he did not misbehave afterwards. Their vast property worth several lakhs and territory lapsed to the British government on Ram Kanwar's death in 1820.

Prominent Karorasinghia Sardars

1. Bhanga Singh : Mit Singh of Sirhali, 35 kms south of Amritsar, was a personal attendant (*gadwābardār* or carrier of a drinking vessel) of Tara Singh Ghaiba. His two nephews, Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh, were with him. They seized in January, 1764, the parganah of Pehoa on the old bed of river Sarasvati, 22 kms west of Thanesar. They commanded a force of 750 horse and 250 foot. They coveted Thanesar which had two forts. One was captured by Budh Singh Dallewalia, and the other was in the possession of Nanhe Khan Ranghar. Nanhe Khan submitted and Budh Singh was expelled after a hard and long struggle. The two brothers divided their territory. Pehowa went to Bhag Singh and Thanesar to Bhanga Singh. To strengthen his hold Bhanga Singh built a third stronger fort at Kahod.

After some time a few of his villages were captured by Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. Bhanga Singh made a common cause with other Sikh sardars in recovering his territory from him. In 1779 Bhanga Singh submitted to Abdul Ahad Khan during his expedition to Patiala. On 12 September, 1779, the minister sent a few baskets of sweets into his tent. Bhanga Singh wrote to the sardars of Shahabad and Ambala to join him. They replied : "You have plundered the royal domains. Now that the Prince and Nawab Majd-ud-daulah have come into your territory, you seek assistance from us. We will not come."

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Bhanga Singh participated in Sikh raids into the Ganga Doab. On 3 June, 1783, he ravaged the villages of Kairanah parganah. Mir Fazal Ali, the amil of the place, came out of his fort to oppose him, but he was slain along with thirty other men. In January, 1786, Bhanga Singh with other Sikh chiefs, at the head of 5,000 horse entered the Ganga Doab, and plundered a few villages near Ghausgarh. They ravaged Mirath, Hapur and Garh Muktesar. In April, 1789, Mahadji Sindhia, Regent of the Mughal Empire, confirmed Bhanga Singh's right to *rakhi* and *kambali* in Bidauli and Kairanah parganahs.

In December, 1790, some Sikh sardars including Bhanga Singh, invaded Patiala territory. Diwan Nanun Mal sought help from Maratha general, Rane Khan, who was in the Ganga Doab. Rane Khan accepted the invitation. He was frequently attacked by Bhanga Singh and others. Everyday they carried off some elephants, camels, horses and other goods. In one raid near Jhansā, 23 kms north-west of Thanesar, Bhanga Singh at the head of 300 horse, seized three elephants, eight horses and some baggage.

Leaving Rane Khan, Bhanga Singh entered the Ganga Doab, and advanced upto Anupshahar on the Ganga, about 250 kms distant. It was a British cantonment under the charge of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Stuart. Bhanga Singh had about one thousand Sikh horsemen with him. On the morning of 3 January, 1791, the Colonel was galloping his horse unattended. A band of robbers numbering about sixty horse and foot captured him. Just then Bhanga Singh appeared on the scene. He fell upon the robbers, took possession of the Colonel and brought him to Thanesar where he was kept in the fort. The matter was referred to Lord Cornwallis, the governor-general, at Calcutta. Cornwallis studied their history, and came to the conclusion that these "freebooters" must not be given any provocation. The Nawab Wazir of Oudh and the British Resident at Lucknow wrote friendly letters to Bhanga Singh. In reply Bhanga Singh made professions of friendship without mentioning a word about the Colonel.

Along with Bhanga Singh's letter, the Colonel also sent a letter to the British Resident at Lucknow. He stated that Bhanga Singh was a self-willed man who ruled rather than submitted to the opinions of others. "Were you acquainted with the licentious barbarity of this people, you would readily conceive the situation of hazard I have hitherto been in." He suggested that the reply from the Nawab and

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the Resident should be "not only civil but friendly, and his excellency ought also to send him some presents." The British Resident sent him a letter of credit on Patiala and a bill of exchange for Rs. 1,000 on Thanesar. He wrote to the governor-general that Bhanga Singh would not release the Colonel without a ransom. Cornwallis refused to pay a ransom. On 7 March, 1791, he wrote a very friendly and flattering letter to Bhanga Singh. He also threw a temptation of buying horses from the Panjab through him.

The Nawab of Oudh wrote to Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya to persuade Bhanga Singh to release the Colonel. Rae Singh went to Thanesar. Bhanga Singh told him that "he will not release the Colonel without a ransom, that the Sikhs fear no human being, and that he does not wish to receive any further application from him (Roy Singh) unless he can settle about the money."

Bhanga Singh's reply was received by the governor-general on 14 May, 1791. It said : Your letter "filled me with delight, and changed the pain of absence to pleasure.....The standards of Khalsa Jeu (the Seiks), are conjointly erected in the Hill country..... It is probable that in a short time.....the Khalsa Jeu very quickly return to the Doab. As to what you write about the release of Colonel Stuart all points have been explained to Roy Singh....."

There was a Sikh misldar of Bhanga Singh. It was Jai Singh Nanga, because he wore only a turban and shorts. In winter he covered himself by a loose sheet. He served the Colonel very faithfully. Nawab Muhammad Gulsher Khan of Kunjpura also helped the Colonel by providing him with money secretly.

Rae Singh suggested that the fort of Kunjpura with all the property therein should be handed over to Bhanga Singh in return for the Colonel's enlargement. Failing this he recommended that the *zamindars* in the neighbourhood should be bribed to effect the Colonel's release when Bhanga Singh was away to the hills.

The Nawab of Oudh then approached Begam Samru. She went to Thanesar and offered Bhanga Singh Rs. 20,000 for releasing the Colonel. Bhanga Singh demanded one lakh of rupees. Ultimately the bargain was struck at Rs. 60,000. This amount was paid and the Colonel was released on 24 October, 1791, after a confinement of over nine months. He was sent to Kunjpura. From there the Begam took him to Sardhana and then to Delhi. Four English officers and a company of soldiers were sent from Anupshahar to Delhi to bring the Colonel. Shah Alam II granted them audience on 23 November, 1791. The

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Colonel and the officers offered a nazar of eleven gold mohars and in return received robes of honour.

Karnal seized by Bhanga Singh

Mahadji Sindhia had appointed Devi Ditta, a son of Diwan Nanun Mal of Patiala, detained in his camp as a hostage for the payment of tribute, in charge of Karnal district. On the death of Devi Ditta in 1794 and of his successor in 1795, Bhanga Singh captured Karnal district.

Nana Rao Maratha's expedition, 1795

In September, 1795, Nana Rao Maratha came to the Cis-Satluj region to realize tributes from the Sikh chiefs. At Karnal he summoned Bhanga Singh to his camp and demanded a tribute of Rs. 5,000 only. Bhanga Singh replied he was a soldier and had no money to give. Nana Rao said the place of a soldier was in the saddle, and he should abdicate his estates. Bhanga Singh left the Maratha camp. Nana Rao then demanded Rs. 5,000 from Gulsher Khan of Kunjpura. The Nawab replied that he would pay if he would secure him the fort of Biana, 25 kms north of Karnal, which was in possession of Bhanga Singh. On the receipt of the above sum Nana Rao besieged Biana. Bhanga Singh continued fighting for eighteen days, but could not defeat Nana Rao. Leaving his nephew Mahtab Singh at Biana, Bhanga Singh went to Ladwa to seek help from Gurdit Singh. He was lavishly entertained for three days. Meanwhile Gurdit Singh sent a secret message on behalf of Bhanga Singh to Mahtab Singh to hand over the fort to Gulsher Khan. On learning of this treachery Bhanga Singh returned to Biana. Nana Rao gave charge of Biana siege to Gulsher Khan, and himself attacked Thanesar. Bhanga Singh removed his family to a safer place, and harassed the Marathas by night attacks.

Then Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad offered Nana Rao Rs. 5,000 in exchange for the fort of Gumthala which belonged to Bhanga Singh. Nana Rao took the money and besieged Gumthala. Bhanga Singh and Mahtab Singh increased the intensity of their guerilla attacks on the Marathas, by plundering their stores and animals, and by capturing their convoys and forced Nana Rao to retire to Delhi.

In 1799 Bhanga Singh helped the Raja of Jind against the attack of George Thomas. He joined Lord Lake in conquering Delhi in September, 1803, and was granted some additional territory. During his first expedition to Cis-Satluj country in 1806, Maharaja Ranjit Singh

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advanced up to Thanesar and then returned to Ambala. Bhanga Singh accompanied him from Thanesar to the Satluj. But he was not as submissive and subservient as the other Sikh sardars and rajas. So the Maharaja while rewarding other chiefs each with 106 villages, 71 villages, 38 villages, 37 villages and so on, gave Bhanga Singh only one village in Talwandi parganah between Moga and Firozpur, worth Rs. 400 annually. In 1806 he seized Dhowa with the help of Gurdit Singh of Ladwa. Bhanga Singh is described by Griffin as a man "of a most savage and untameable character," and as "the fiercest and most feared of all the Cis-Satluj chiefs."

Bhanga Singh died in 1815. He left behind one son, Fatah Singh, one daughter, and one illegitimate son Sahib Singh by a slave girl. He was not given any share in the estate except maintenance allowance. Fatah Singh succeeded him. The daughter, Karam Kanwar was married to Maharaja Karam Singh of Patiala who considered it the best means to save his territory from Bhanga Singh's depredations. Fatah Singh died in 1819, without issue leaving two widows. One half of his estates was confiscated by the British. The remaining part of the estate was managed by Rani Hasān, Fatah Singh's mother. In correspondence with the British officers she signed herself as Bhanga Singh. Under the prevailing custom she could retain his name and seal. In her langar every passer-by was served with *halwā*, *pūri* and *khir*. Her daughter came from Patiala to attend the funeral of her mother. She caught cold and died immediately afterwards. The headman rushed to Sir George Campbell, the deputy commissioner of Thanesar district, and said: "Great is the *iqbāl* of the Sarkar." He meant that no claimant was left and the entire State would fall to the British Government. On her death Fatah Singh's two widows succeeded her. In 1850, the Thanesar estate lapsed to the British Government.

Bhanga Singh's brother Bhag Singh died in 1791. He left four sons who are described by Griffin "more audacious and violent than their uncle, Bhanga Singh." Only one of the four sons had a male issue, Jamait Singh who died childless in 1834. and the Pehowa estate escheated to the British.

2. *Dayal Singh* of village Kalsia in tahsil Kasur of Lahore district, a Sandhu Jat, took possession of the parganahs of Kot and Dharamkot.

3. *Dulha Singh or Dulcha Singh* also called Dulja Singh is prominently mentioned in contemporary records of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. After the Sikh conquest of Sarhind he occupied Rādaur and Dāmla in Karnal district. In October, 1774, when the

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Sikh army was "hovering in the neighbourhood of Shahjahanabad," "Dulja Singh Bahadur" along with five other Sikh chiefs, was offered by the Mughal government to enter imperial service at the head of 1,000 horse and 500 foot each. Each horseman was to receive a salary of Rs. 30 per mensem and a foot soldier of Rs. 5/-. The negotiations failed.

Zabita Khan was fighting against the imperialists in 1776. He persuaded many Sikh chiefs to join him. Dulha Singh was one of them. In the battle fought on 11 March, 1776, at Amirnagar, 13 kms northwest of Muzaffarnagar, the Mughal general Abul Qasim was slain. During Abdul Ahad's campaign against Patiala in 1779, Dulha Singh joined the Nawab. On 26 September, 1779, Dulha Singh offered him as *nazar* a horse and a bow, and received a *khilat* of five pieces, a *sarpech* and a sword. When imperial commander, Shafi, invaded Cis-Satluj region in 1780, Dulha Singh at the head of 500 horse, on 21 February, 1780, encamped on the banks of the Jamuna in order to plunder Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar districts. Najaf Khan, prime minister of the Mughal Empire, issued instructions to Shafi on 28 February : "Do not advance farther and never interfere with the Sikhs who intend marching towards Saharanpur." On 29 February, 1780, he again wrote to Shafi : "Fight if the Sikhs come to oppose you otherwise do not take the initiative yourself." Dulha Singh with other Sikh sardars entered the Ganga Doab on 28 February, 1780.

In the first week of November, 1780, Dulha Singh with other sardars went to Thanesar to oust Bhanga Singh. They were opposed by Bhāla Singh and Lohā Singh from inside the city.

In January, 1785, the Sikhs entered the Ganga Doab in batches. The advance group consisted of Baghel Singh, Gurdit Singh and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. The second group which left a day later comprised Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad, Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya and Dulha Singh of Radaur. Karam Singh wrote to the first group to postpone marching till their arrival in their camp. Baghel Singh replied that they had closed their camp and Karam Singh's party should join them at the next stage. The news came that Zabita Khan had died at Ghausgarh on 21 January, 1785. The leaders of the second force immediately left for Ghausgarh and returned from there on 1st February. Dulha Singh participated in the plunder of Chandausi.

Mahadji Sindhia deputed Ambaji Ingle to the Cis-Satluj Sikhs to make a treaty of peace and friendship in March, 1785. The Sikhs in a body of 12,000 men under nine chiefs lay encamped at Ganaur, 60

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kms north of Delhi. Ambaji stayed at Bakhtawarpur, 21 kms north of Delhi. He invited two representatives of the Sikhs into his camp to discuss the matter. They deputed Mohar Singh and Dulha Singh. Ingle granted them *khilats*. The main point of discussion was that the Sikh chiefs should give up collecting *rakhi* and should accept jagirs in Karnal and Rohtak districts of the value of *rakhi*. Mohar Singh and Dulha Singh returned to their own camp to apprise their comrades of what had passed between them and Ambaji. The Sikhs agreed to form a provisional treaty with Ambaji to see what concessions they could get from Mahadji. The two Sikh sardars came back to Ambaji's camp on 27 March, 1785. Ambaji then visited the Sikh camp. The provisional treaty was concluded on 30 March, 1785. Ambaji was assisted in negotiations by Maha Rao Pratab Singh of Alwar.

Ambaji then left his camp together with Dulha Singh and Mohar Singh, and reached Mathura on 10 April. The two sardars were presented to Mahadji on 11 April. The peace-parleys continued for a month, and the final treaty was concluded on 9 May, 1785. The terms of the treaty were as follows :

(*i*) The Sikh sardars will contribute a force of 5,000 horse and shall receive allowances and a jagir of ten lakhs of rupees.

(*ii*) The jagirs worth 7½ lakhs will be granted in Karnal district, and to the value of 2½ lakhs in the parganahs of Gohana, Kharkhaudah, Maham and Tosham.

(*iii*) The Sikh sardars shall prevent their people from taking the *rākhi* "in the circuit of the Royal palace and in the possessions of the Sarcar."

(*iv*) The Sikhs shall never cause any injury to the country of the English Company and that of the Nawab Vizier

Dulha Singh and Mohar Singh were then granted robes of honour, necklaces of pearls and horses in addition to Rs. 5,000 as their travelling expenses.

The treaty was signed in the morning of 9 May, and in the evening of the same day, Dulha Singh's agent visited the clerk of James Anderson, British Resident at the court of Sindhia, in the disguise of a cloth merchant. Having displayed his drapery he told the Munshi that he had also some diamonds to sell, and on account of their preciousness they could only be shown in private. When the Munshi retired to examine the wonderful gems, the Sikh agent disclosed his identity and purpose. He stated that he had been deputed by Dulha Singh to win the friendship of the English against the Marathas. He

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told him that "his master as well as the other Sikh chiefs were extremely desirous of establishing a friendship with the English. He complained bitterly of the deceit which had been practised upon them by Sindhia.....Dooljah Singh said, he being at present in the power of Sindhia, had from necessity yielded to these terms, but he declared that as they had discovered clearly the insidious scope of Sindhia's designs they were determined not to adhere to the Treaty."

Anderson instructed his clerk to inform the Sikh agent that the English and Sindhia were "certainly connected in the firmest friendship, but that the Seik Chiefs may rest perfectly assured that it is not our intention to take any part with him against them."

4. *Gurbakhsh Singh* was a Sandhu Jat of village Kalsia in tahsil Kasur of Lahore district. In the time of Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan he took pahul from Bhai Mani Singh, and made all his brothers relatives and village fellows Sikhs. He joined Karam Singh of Paijgarh. On his death he exchanged turbans with Karora Singh. In January, 1764, he captured the parganah of Chhachhrauli, 114 villages, in Ambala district, and laid the foundation of an independent state, named after his native village as Kalsia State. He acquired a rich booty during the Dal Khalsa's excursions into Haryana—Jaipur—Bikaner region, plundering Bhiwani, Hansi, Hisar, Shekhavati, Nolgarh, Mundrelo, Sikar, Mandran, Bisau, Surajgarh, etc. In the Jalandhar Doab he possessed Banbeli parganah in Hoshiarpur district. Some of his villages had been seized by Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. In 1769 he recovered them with the help of other Sikh sardars who had equally suffered at Raja's hands. Along with several Sikh sardars, he tried to form an alliance with the English against Mahadji Sindhia, in 1785. He died later in the year.

5. His son *Jodh Singh Kalsia* (1751-1817) succeeded him. He was a man of great ability and considerably extended his possessions. During a Maratha incursion a great battle was fought at Shahpur Machhaunda near Ambala in which Jodh Singh seized a lot of Maratha goods and equipment. In 1798 he captured parganah of Dera Basi (54 villages) from Khazan Singh of Rasulpur. In 1803 he married his son Hari Singh to Ram Kaur, the daughter of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala, who "thus quieted a most dangerous neighbour." On the death of Baghel Singh in 1805 he became the head of Karorasinghia Misl.

[1]Chhachhrauli town is situated 56 kms north-east of Ambala near Jagadhri railway station.

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh won him as an ally in 1806 during his first expedition into the Cis-Satluj region. He gave Jodh Singh the parganah of Chirik (7 villages) in Moga tahsil. The Maharaja seized Khurdin from Baghel Singh's widow and gave it to Jodh Singh. In 1807 he participated in the Naraingarh campaign under Ranjit Singh. After its fall Jodh Singh marched homeward. On the way he took possession of the parganahs of Lāharpur near Sadhaura, Budala, Kheri. On the fall of the Dallewalia Misl, Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted him the parganah of Garhdiwala in the Jalandhar Doab worth one lakh and a quarter annually. On 22 February, 1814, the Maharaja granted him a robe of honour consisting of five garments, one horse and one mortar. His son Sobha Singh also attended Ranjit Singh's court. In 1817 the Maharaja sent an expedition under Missar Diwan Chand to conquer Multan. Jodh Singh participated in it. The expedition failed. Jodh Singh was severely wounded in the attack on the fort. On his return to Chhachhrauli he passed away in the beginning of 1818.

The total area of Kalsia state was 176 square miles, and it contained 175 villages in the Cis-Satluj region. His revenues amounted to five lakhs annually.

6. *Gurdit Singh of Ladwa* and Sahib Singh Khondah were two brothers. They were Sānsi Jats of village Veyin Pūin in Amritsar district. Khondah is a village in Gurdaspur district. On account of his long residence there with his relatives he got this surname. They seized 117 villages in Karnal district worth two and a half lakhs annually. Babain was the headquarter of Sahib Singh and Lādwā of Gurdit Singh. Indri and Pipli also belonged to him. Gurdit Singh had 750 horse and 250 foot.

Gurdit Singh was a powerful sardar. His territory lay on both sides of river Jamuna. Sir George Campbell says he "led his horsemen to the very walls of Delhi." On 20 February, 1780, Najaf Khan, the prime minister of the Mughal Empire, sent a *doshala* and a *goshwara*, (an embroidered cloth worn as an ornament over the sides of a turban) for Gurdit Singh. This distinction did not stop him from ravaging the Mughal territory. In September, 1780, Gurdit Singh at the head of 200 Sikhs crossed the Jamuna by way of Tanda and plundered four villages. On 29 March, 1781, Gurdit Singh with 200 horse raided the Ganga Doab and carried away cattle from Garhi Bhāi Khan, 38 kms northwest of Muzaffarnagar. On 2 April he plundered a village near Mirath, and slew and wounded a few persons.

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On 3 June, 1783, he ravaged the villages in Kairanah parganah. Mir Fazl Ali, the āmil of the place, came out of his fort to oppose him; but he was slain along with thirty other men. In January, 1785, he participated in the devastation of Chandausi.

In May, 1785, Gurdit Singh wrote to Colonel Sir John Cumming, in command at Farrukhabad, that they had plundered Chandausi at the instigation of Mahadji Sindhia. This was purely a fabrication. In August he again entered the Doab at the head of about 1,000 horse and plundered Mirath district. In December, 1786, in a letter Gurdit Singh assured George Forster, officer on special duty at Lucknow, of his friendship for the British. On 24 January, 1787, Gurdit Singh wrote to Prince Jahandar Shah, the rebel son of Shah Alam II at Lucknow, assuring him of his "whole hearted support."

In 1787 Ghulam Qadir Rohilla attacked Delhi and invited the Sikh sardars to join him. On 4 September, 1787, Gurdit Singh joined Ghulam Qadir who granted him an elephant and four trays of clothes. His companions received 22 doshalas. He was given a place in the Rohilla camp at Rohilla Sarae. On 5 September Gurdit Singh let his horses to graze in the green crops. Ghulam Qadir asked him not to spoil the crops and supplied him with grain and fodder. On 23 September Gurdit Singh shifted to Okhla Ghat. In March, 1788, Gurdit Singh deserted Ghulam Qadir and began to plunder his country as well as the crownlands. The revenues of crownlands were meant for the royal household. Mahadji Sindhia, the Regent of the Mughal Empire, had to meet the expenses of the Emperor and his family. He considered fighting against the Sikhs useless. So he deputed Rane Khan, Ali Bahadur, Baluji Ingle and Begam Samru to win over the Sikhs and to stop their raids on royal domains. They came to Kunjpura in April, 1789. Gurdit Singh and other Sikh sardars went there. An agreement was arrived at between the two parties. Feudal tenures were bestowed upon the Sikh sardars in commutation of their claims to blackmail. Gurdit Singh was confirmed in the estates of Jhinjhana, Kandhla and Shamli. Similarly other sardars were also confirmed. All of them agreed to protect the Doab from their own depredations as well as from the attacks of other Sikhs. About one thousand Sikh collectors were allowed to be stationed in the Doab to realize *rākhi* from the people. The Maratha officers helped them in this business. Thus the government legalized a system of exactions which they could not suppress.

Nanun Mal was the Diwan of Patiala. On the occasion of a Maratha

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expedition the Diwan had paid a certain sum of tribute and for the balance had surrendered his son Devi Ditta as a surety. He was detained in Mahadji's camp along with his thirty companions, mostly his caste fellows, and relatives. The Diwan died on 21 November, 1791. His property was confiscated by Raja Sahib Singh, and all his sons and relatives were dismissed and deprived of all their belongings. There seemed no chance for the liberation of Devi Ditta.

In December, 1793, the Rajputs of Mirath district under their leader Sham Singh revolted against Mahadji Sindhia who despatched Jiva Dada Bakhshi to suppress the Rajput rising. Devi Ditta was in attendance upon the Maratha chief. In the battle of Mirath the Marathas were repulsed. When the Marathas were about to flee, Devi Ditta with his 30 men rushed into the thick of the battle. He vehemently attacked Sham Singh, and shot him dead. The Rajputs fled away. Mahadji was pleased with Devi Ditta's valour, and appointed him to the charge of Karnal district with 500 Maratha troops.

Gurdit Singh coveted Karnal. He besieged Karnal at the head of 4,000 horse. Devi Ditta was out on a tour. He returned three hours after nightfall. Gurdit Singh took to flight. Devi Ditta pursued him. At daybreak Gurdit Singh came to a halt. A fierce engagement lasted for three hours. Gurdit Singh left the field and retired to Lādwā. Devi Ditta was killed in an ambush by the Ranghars of Gharaunda shortly afterwards. He was succeeded by his brother Sipāhimal. He also lost his life while fighting in the parganah of Panipat. Karnal was seized by Bhanga Singh of Thanesar. He was expelled by Gurdit Singh.

In December, 1798, Gurdit Singh helped Raja Bhag Singh of Jind against George Thomas who had besieged Jind. In September, 1803, the British occupied Delhi, and the Ganga Doab passed under their control. Thus Gurdit Singh lost his territories lying to the east of river Jamuna. In spite of several warnings, the Cis-Satluj Sikhs continued raiding Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Mirath districts for about a year longer. By way of reprisal, the British seized Karnal from Gurdit Singh in April, 1804, and a cantonment was set up there to keep a watch on the Sikh activities.

In December, 1804, Ochterlony in a letter to Lord Wellesley wrote about Gurdit Singh: "His effrontery and treachery would astonish any but a Seik". On December 18, 1804, Colonel Burn defeated the Sikh sardars. In the battle Sher Singh of Buriya, brother of Rae Singh Bhangi, was killed.

The British Government was determined to put a stop to the lawless

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activities of the Sikh chiefs. In March, 1805, a general amnesty was proclaimed for all those who undertook to maintain peace and order by ceasing to raid British territory and by not joining in any anti-British activities. Rae Singh of Buriya and Jagadhri and Gurdit Singh of Lādwā immediately accepted the offer, but the latter was deprived of Karnal for having fought earlier against the British, and for his attachment to Lahore.

In 1806 Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited the Cis-Satluj region for the first time. Crossing the river Satluj on 26 July, 1806, he was joined by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala and Gurdit Singh of Lādwā. Ranjit Singh wished to bestow some favour on his friends who were following him. Unfortunately he applied the same method as he was doing regarding the smaller Sikh sardars in the Trans-Satluj region. The wrong course adopted by him deprived him of the opportunity of establishing a united Sikh state. While returning he stopped for a while at Ghungrana which belonged to Gujar Singh, son of the celebrated Tara Singh Ghaiba. He was driven away. Five villages of his estate worth Rs. 3,550 annually were given to Gurdit Singh, and the rest to others. The two innocent widows of Raekot and Jagraon, Nur-un-nisa and Lachhmi were dispossessed of their territories which had been in the family possession for two hundred years. Gurdit Singh of Ladwa was given the parganah of Baddowal with 32 villages of the annual income of Rs. 23,540, and one village in 1808 worth Rs. 250, total income Rs. 23,790/-. His grand total income was Rs. 1,50,000, cavalry 1,000.

7. Gurdit Singh was succeeded by his son *Raja Ajit Singh*. Sir George Campbell says he "was never liked by our officers; he was related too to the Lahore family". He built a bridge over the Sarasvati river at Thanesar at his own cost. In recognition of this service he was granted the title of Raja.

When the first Anglo-Sikh War broke out in 1845, he was suspected. He was sent to Saharanpur and was kept under strict surveillance. At the news of the first battles of the Sikh War, he felt very much perturbed. He escaped in the night, and riding day and night without any rest he appeared in his estate of Baddowal on the Satluj 206 kms away. There he collected as many men as he could and joined the Sikh army in the battle of Baddowal in January, 1846. Sir Harry Smith (afterwards governor of Cape Colony) was sent to oppose the Sikhs. Sir George Campbell writes : "that redoubtable

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hero Sir Harry Smith was so badly mauled, and lost all his baggage and ammunition."

Raja Ajit Singh's territories were annexed and properties confiscated. George Campbell, a young man of twenty-two, was appointed Deputy Commissioner and Political Assistant of Kaithal and Ladwa. He says the British officers had considered the Raja of Ladwa "a very bad ruler." But "when I went into his revenue accounts and system I was surprised to find how regular everything was, and how much that we had supposed to be mere arbitrary, high-handedness, was really very precisely regulated by custom and precedent, and the subject of very exact accounts." Ajit Singh was kept as a prisoner in the fort of Allahabad. He killed the guards and escaped. He died in Kashmir some time later on.

8. *Karam Singh*, another resident of Kalsia, took possession of Bilaspur parganah near Chhachhrauli.

9. *Kirpal Singh's* sister was the wife of Sahib Singh of Babain. He belonged to a village near Bhatinda. In 1770 he took possession of Shamgarh.

10. *Mansa Singh* seized the parganah of Khardumbala in the Jalandhar Doab worth Rs. 61,525 annually.

11. *Nodh Singh* from the same village maintained a contingent of 200 horsemen. He occupied the parganah of Leda where his family is still represented.

12. Karora Singh's favourite follower was *Rae Singh*, son of Mahtab Singh, the killer of notorious Massa Ranghar. Mahtab Singh was executed. Rae Singh was a little child then. As the government was in search of all the members of his family, the child was taken away by the family sweeper. Being afraid of his own life, he left the child in the fields where a Kamboh woman picked him up. As a lad he joined the Sikh band of Sham Singh, founder of the misl. On account of Mahtab Singh's service and sacrifice and Rae Singh's bravery and courage, Sham Singh married his own daughter to him. Rae Singh built a mudfort at Mirankot. He died in 1809.

Rae Singh had four sons. Gurbakhsh Singh and Kanwar Singh lived at Kotlah Bādlah in Ludhiana district. Ratan Singh lived at Banga in Hoshiarpur district, and was called Bangu or Bhangu. Later on he shifted to village Bhāri in Samralah tahsil of Ludhiana district. Ratan Singh was a scholar of Gurmukhi and Persian. At the suggestion of Murray, Assistant Agent at Ludhiana, he wrote a history of the Sikhs entitled *Panth Prakash*. In the first Afghan War

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of 1839-1842, Ratan Singh supplied transport and provisions to the British Government. During the first Anglo-Sikh War, his son Gurmukh Singh with four fully armed soldiers served in the British army. He also helped the British authorities in 1857.

13. *Sahib Singh Khondah* and Gurdit Singh, two brothers were Sānsi Jats of village Veyīn Pūin in Amritsar district. Sahib Singh was called Khondah after a village in Gurdaspur district where he had lived for a long time. In 1764 at the conquest of Sarhind province by the Sikhs, both the brothers captured 117 villages in Karnal district. Sahib Singh settled at Babain and Gurdit Singh at Lādwā.

The crownlands which supported the Emperor and the enormous royal household were situated in the Ganga Doab and in the region north of Delhi. Both these areas were frequently plundered by the Sikhs, and the royal family was starving. Mughal Ali Khan, alias Nasir-ul-Mulk, was the third son of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asafjah of Haidarabad (Deccan). He was anxious to establish another state of his own. Shah Alam II appointed him governor of Sarhind province on 4 April, 1772. At the head of a force of 7,000 men he marched through the Ganga Doab. On crossing the river Jamuna he was attacked by Sahib Singh Khondah and other Sikhs. He was joined by Daler Khan, son of Najabat Khan, the ruler of Kunjpura, with 500 horse. Sahib Singh and his companions again attacked him near Kunjpura. Severe fighting took place the whole day, in which about 500 men were killed on both sides. Mughal Ali entered the Kunjpura fort. The Sikhs besieged it. On the 14th day Mughal Ali came out, but he was defeated by the Sikhs. In the night he slipped into a boat and sailed down the Jamuna to Delhi. After some time he went to Kabul to seek help from Timur Shah Durrani.

In October, 1774, the Sikhs were hovering about Delhi. Sahib Singh Khondah was there. Abdul Ahad offered to take them into imperial service. A horseman was to get Rs. 30 per mensem and a foot soldier Rs. 5. The chiefs were to receive *khilats* and parganahs for their support. The Sikhs did not agree. In 1780 the Cis-Satluj Sikhs divided themselves into two groups and began fighting between themselves. On one side there were five sardars Sahib Singh Khondah, Diwan Singh, Bhanga Singh, Bhag Singh of Buriya and Rae Singh of Jagadhri. On the other side there were seven sardars, Baghel Singh, Dulha Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Karam Singh Nirmala, Karam Singh Shahid, Lal Singh and Sada Singh.

In the beginning of 1781, the Sikhs spread themselves over the

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upper Ganga Doab, causing destruction everywhere, particularly in Manglor parganah of Saharanpur. The imperial general Shafi was staying at Kunjpura. He approached Saharanpur at a time when the Sikhs were scattered about for plundering. Sahib Singh Khondah happened to be near Shafi's camp. On 20 February, 1781, he attacked Shafi in full confidence of victory. But Shafi's well-directed artillery and disciplined sepoy musketeers proved more than a match for their formidable adversaries. Sahib Singh Khondah was killed and several others were wounded. The Sikhs retired homeward. Shafi pursued them. They were attacked while crossing the Jamuna, and many Sikhs were drowned in the river.

On his death Babain was occupied by Gurdit Singh. Shamgarh was given to Sahib Singh's widow who began to live there with her brother. Sahib Singh's adopted son, Bhagwan Singh, was allotted twelve villages.

14. Another sardar of this misl was *Ujjal Singh*. He set himself up at Dhanaurah in 1764. He possessed seven villages entirely, and had one-fourth share in another forty-eight villages around Dhanaurah.

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Territories

The territories of Karorasinghia misl were largely situated in Karnal district between rivers Jamuna and Markanda. Some of their estates lay also in the Jalandhar and Bari Doabs.

Cis-Satluj region

Bahadurpur, Bahlolpur, Biana, Channa, Chhābar, Chhalondi, Chirik, Dāmla, Dera Basi, Dhanaurah, Dhin, Dhowa, Garhi, Gumthala, Gurhā, Haibatpur, Jamaitgarh, Kalsia, Kanod, Kharak, Kheri, Khurdin, Kinori, Kogpur, Kotli, Lālpura, Lotal, Mustafabad, Nangal, Paoni, Pehowa, Radaur, Sadhaura, Sardaheri, Sikandarpur, Sikandra, Sobraon, Talākaur, Thanesar, Zainpur.

Jalandhar Doab

Babeli, Basiān, Garhshankar, Hariana, (revenues Rs. 78,429), Hoshiarpur, Mahalpur, (revenues Rs. 1,61,901), Sham Chaurasi, (revenues Rs. 1,85,911), Shamsabad, Shergarh (revenues, Rs. 3,307), Talwan (revenues Rs. 10,000).

Bari Doab

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CHAPTER 6

The Nishanwala Misl

Nishan means a standard or a banner, and *Nishanwala* means a standard-bearer. In 1733 the Sikhs had accepted the terms of Zakariya Khan, viceroy of the Panjab. They settled at Amritsar. There it was decided that the Khalsa should have five flags. They were to be worshipped in a solemn ceremony, when the Khalsa would start on an expedition, and offerings would be made to the flags. At the conclusion of an expedition further offerings were to be made to the standards as a token of gratitude. Dasaundha Singh and his four companions, Sangat Singh, Jai Singh, Koer Singh of Kairon and Man Singh Dandak, carried the five flags of the Dal Khalsa on horseback in the forefront. The national flag of the Sikhs was of saffron colour. At the time of actual fighting the standards were kept in the base camp under proper guard, while the members of the misl participated in the fighting and in plundering, uttering loudly their war cry of 'Sat Sri Akal or Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa, Sri Wah Guru ji ki Fatah." The offerings received in cash and kind also belonged to them ; but the money was generally spent on Hari Mandar and the holy tank. The misl was usually stationed at Amritsar to guard the sacred precincts.

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Dasaundha Singh

Dasaundha Singh, the founder of the misl, was a Gill[1] Jat son of Chaudhri Sahib Rae of village Singhanwala in Firozpur district. At the young age his moustaches turned white and so he was called Dhaul Muchhiya. Dasaundha Singh took pahul from Bhai Mani Singh. In 1734 he was one of the leaders of the Taruna Dal. In 1748 he was

[1]Griffin and Massy are of the opinion that Dasaundha Singh was a Dhillon Jat of Chubhal in Amritsar district and that he was half-brother of Baghel Singh Karorasinghia.

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declared the leader of the Nishanwala Misl at the time of the formation of the Dal Khalsa. The Nishanwala and Dallewalia misls were kept as a reserve force at Amritsar.

In January, 1764, after the conquest of Sarhind province Dasaundha Singh took possession of Singhanwala in Firozpur district, Sanahwal, 15 kms east of Ludhiana, Sarae Lashkari Khan, 13 kms west of Khanna, Doraha, 7 kms from Sanahwal, Amloh, Zira, Ludhar and Ambala, where he established his headquarters. He was killed in May, 1767, at Meerut in the sudden attack by Jahan Khan and Zabita Khan.

Sangat Singh

His younger brother, Sangat Singh, succeeded him. He built a brick wall around the city of Ambala to protect it from robbers and marauders. Until recently Ambala city did not have sufficient water of good quality. Sangat Singh did not like to stay there for want of water. He appointed his cousins, Gurbakhsh Singh and Lal Singh, paternal uncle's sons in charge of Ambala and himself retired to Singhanwala in Firozpur district, where he died in 1774. Lal Singh began to build a fort near the border of Patiala State at a place called Jamaitgarh, and he began to live there. Raja Amar Singh of Patiala, Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind and Rae Ilyas of Raekot attacked Lal Singh, but the construction continued.

Lal Singh had three sons who drove out Gurbakhsh Singh. Gurbakhsh Singh settled at Morindah on the Chandigarh-Ludhiana road. They divided the territories among themselves.

Mohar Singh

Lal Singh's eldest son Mohar Singh obtained Ambala and Zira, and Kapur Singh settled at Singhanwala. The youngest Anup Singh took possession of Sarae Lashkari Khan.

Mohar Singh gained prominence among the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs who had recently settled there. On 14 September, 1779, Mohar Singh waited at Thanesar upon Abdul Ahad Khan who was then leading an expedition against Patiala. He offered the Nawab a horse, a bow, a pair of cotton bed-sheets and was awarded a *khilat* of five pieces, a *sarpech* and a sword. Shafi, another Mughal general, carried on a campaign against the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs in 1781. Supplies of grain and other foodstuff were sent to him from Delhi by Banjaras, who were the carriers of heavy goods from one place to another. In March,

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1781, Mohar Singh plundered them. In 1785, Mahadji Sindhia, Regent of the Mughal Empire, decided to win over the Sikhs by a treaty of friendship. He sent Ambaji Ingle to negotiate it. The Sikhs deputed Mohar Singh and Dulha Singh as their representatives first to Ambaji's camp nearby and then to Mahadji Sindhia at Mathura. As a result a treaty was signed by Mohar Singh and Dulha Singh with Mahadji Sindhia on 9 May, 1785. At the time of departure they were granted robes of honour, necklaces of pearls, horses, and a sum of Rs. 5,000 as their travelling expenses.

Mohar Singh possessed a cruel and haughty disposition. The people were generally of submissive and law-abiding nature. Mohar Singh treated them harshly. The masses both Hindus and Muslims looked to Sayyid Mir Munir for guidance. Mohar Singh hated the Sayyid for his popularity and saintliness. One day in winter in 1785 Mohar Singh found the Sayyid sitting all alone in the open basking in the sun. He discharged an arrow and killed him instantly. A wave of deep resentment and anger spread all over the district. The people invited Gurbakhsh Singh from Morindah. He came with a force and all the inhabitants supported him. In the engagement Mohar Singh was killed. His widows retired to his estate at Zira in Firozpur district. Gurbakhsh Singh ruled for a short time and seems to have died in 1786.[1] Gurbakhsh Singh had no children and his widow Daya Kanwar assumed the headship of the misl. She resided in a fort situated to the north-east of the city, called Dhūlkot.

Of Lal Singh's three sons, Mohar Singh was killed in 1785. Kapur Singh and his son Fatah Singh lost their lives in 1797 in a battle with Dayal Singh of Lāhar. Anup Singh was severely wounded and died at home. His widow Sobhrāī ruled at Sarae Lashkari Khan. She was ousted by Ranjit Singh. The estate of Zira belonging to Mohar Singh's widows was attacked by Mohkam Chand in 1806. They fought bravely, but were overpowered, and driven away. Out of their estates 12 villages worth Rs. 7,500 were given by Ranjit Singh to Diwan Mohkam Chand.

Daya Kanwar

Rani Daya Kanwar ruled over her estate remarkably well for nearly thirty-seven years. Griffin says, "She was an excellent ruler and her

[1]Griffin says that Gurbakhsh Singh died as a ruler of Ambala in 1783. At that time Mohar Singh was the chief of Ambala, and he signed the treaty with Mahadji Sindhia on 9 May, 1785.

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estate was one of the best managed in the Protected Territory." Her Diwan or deputy was Sipahimal Bhandari. He was a strict administrator. He did not use any leniency in sex matters. The names of Daya Kanwar and Sipahimal are even at the present day household words in the old native families. Shri Des Raj Mittal of Ambala city, an octogenarian, told the author that if a man and woman were seen freely talking or laughing on a public thoroughfare, they were immediately hauled up before Sipahimal and were punished. His residence in Mohalla Khatrian in the city was called Zulumgarh or an abode of cruelty. Not to speak of any dacoity or murder, even theft or pilfering was a rare occurrence. The British government treated her with great courtesy and consideration.

In November, 1808, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's fury uprooted this innocent woman. He ejected Daya Kanwar from the city, usurped all her property and treasures, and seized her territories. He distributed her country between Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, his maternal uncle, and Bhag Singh's closest friend and ally Lal Singh of Kaithal. To avoid any popular rising in favour of Daya Kanwar, he left a strong force of 5,000 under his commander Ganda Singh Safi at Ambala. According to Giani Gian Singh he was designated his governor of the Cis-Satluj province. The Maharaja went to Hardwar to have a dip in the Ganga. On his way back he squeezed money from the sons of late Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad Markanda. Bhanga Singh of Thanesar did not come to see him. Ranjit Singh reached there, and forced Bhanga Singh, the most ferocious of all Sikh sardars, to accompany him. Finding the British army ready to face him at Karnal and Charles Matcalfe behind him at Malerkotla, Ranjit Singh fell back.

In 1809 by the treaty of Amritsar, the Cis-Satluj chiefs passed under the British protection. Daya Kanwar appealed to Colonel Ochterlony. He forced the chiefs of Jind and Kaithal to withdraw their troops and restored Daya Kanwar to be the mistress of her territories. On her death in 1823 her estates and property lapsed to the British Government.

Captain Mathews passed through the territory governed by Rani Daya Kanwar in April, 1808. He has highly praised her administration.[1]

[1]Vide chapter 16.

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PROMINENT NISHANWALA SARDARS

1. *Dharam Singh of Morindah:* Gurbakhsh Singh, husband of celebrated Daya Kanwar, had entrusted Morindah to Dharam Singh. His sons were ruling there. In 1807, Maharaja Ranjit Singh expelled them. The Morindah estate consisted of 27 villages worth Rs. 17,000 annually. They were given to Raja Bhag Singh of Jind.

2. *Jai Singh of Lidhran* was a Gurm Jat of village Karanke Dhirke[1] near Atari in Amritsar district. He captured 27 villages in parganah Lidhran and seven villages in Kharar tahsil yielding Rs. 60,000 per annum. Raja Amar Singh of Patiala forcibly occupied his seven villages of Kharar. The dispute continued for several years. Eventually by a compromise three villages were retained by Amar Singh and four were restored to Jai Singh. Griffin is of the opinion that Jai Singh was the most important member of the confederacy. Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha was married to Jai Singh's daughter. On his death in 1773 his son Charat Singh succeeded him, and accepted British protection in 1809.

3. *Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad:* Himmat Singh Nishanwala captured in January, 1764, Shahabad Markanda and Ismailabad. He died issueless in 1771. His nephew Karam Singh Nirmala (Spotless) succeeded him. Karam Singh Nirmala commanded a force of 750 horse and 250 foot. In 1779 he joined Abdul Ahad minister of Delhi, in his expedition against Patiala. On 8 February, 1780, Raja Amar Singh left Patiala to attend the marriage of the daughter of Raja Hamir Singh of Nabha. His luggage was to follow him. Karam Singh Nirmala lay encamped at Bazidpur, 15 kms from Patiala, with seven or eight thousand horse. He plundered Amar Singh's baggage on 15 February. Karam Singh was joined by other Sikh sardars. They besieged Patiala and demanded money from Amar Singh. Jai Singh Kanhiya was coming to Patiala to celebrate the marriage of Jaimal Singh Kanhiya with Sahib Kaur on 3 March, 1780. Karam Singh and his allies raised the siege on 29 February and retired towards Sarhind. After the marriage Jai Singh and Amar Singh despatched a force of 10,000 selected horse in pursuit of Karam Singh and his companions and drove them away. In March, 1781, the imperial general, Shafi, was in difficulties during his campaign against the Cis-Satluj chiefs. He invited Raja Amar Singh to come to his help. The Raja left Patiala at the head of a strong force to join

[1]Gian Singh in his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 592, says that Jai Singh belonged to village Kairon.

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Shafi. Karam Singh blocked his way near Ambala, and did not allow him to proceed farther.

Shafi's deputy Khalil Khan occupied Shahabad in Karam Singh's absence. Karam Singh and other Sikhs besieged Khalil Khan. Shafi also was kept engaged by the other Sikhs in the neighbourhood of Jagadhri. Khalil Khan made piteous appeals to Shafi for help. Shafi ordered Sher Din Khan and Bagha Rao to go to his rescue. They declined to leave because their troops were starving, and they were deserting. On 18 May, 1781, Shafi was informed that Karam Singh and Baghel Singh had created a breach in the wall of the sarae in which Khalil Khan had taken shelter. On 22 May news arrived that Khalil Khan sued for peace and sent a horse to Karam Singh by way of *nazar*. Karam Singh demanded complete surrender unconditionally. Khalil Khan submitted with 300 horse, 800 foot and two pieces of cannon. His troops were plundered and let off, while Khalil Khan was shot dead.

In January, 1785, Karam Singh and other Sikhs entered the Ganga Doab in two batches. On 1st February, 1785 Karam Singh with Rae Singh and Dulha Singh was encamped near Ghausgarh. The other batch under Baghel Singh was 7 kms ahead of them. Baghel Singh came to Karam Singh's camp to condole with him on his wife's death. In January, 1786, Karam Singh and others again plundered the Ganga Doab. A body of 12,000 Sikhs led by Karam Singh Nirmala in April, 1790, plundered the Doab including Hapur, 57 kms from Delhi and Aligarh, 126 kms from Delhi. Karam Singh then sent his vakil to Mahadji Sindhia, Regent of the Mughal Empire, demanding more grants of land in the Doab promising to stop his raids in future. Sindhia held out some hope. Karam Singh and other Sikhs again sacked the upper Ganga Doab in December, 1790. On 5 February, 1791, Khair-ud-din wrote: "The Sikhs plunder the country of crores of rupees." Sindhia deputed Devji Gavle to discuss the matter with Karam Singh. Peace negotiations continued for some time. As Sindhia was too busy in other quarters to spare time to solve the Sikh problem, Gavle's mission proved fruitless. After some time Sindhia granted to Karam Singh Shikarpur taluqa in jagir and the title of Sardar under the royal seal. In September-October, 1795, a Maratha general, Nana Rao, led an expedition against the Sikhs of Cis-Satluj region. Karam Singh Nirmala met him and offered him Rs. 5,000 if he would give him Bhanga Singh's fort of Gumthala, 40 kms east of Thanesar on the bank of river Jamuna. Nana took

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the money and besieged the fort. Karam Singh's daughter, Raj Kaur, was married to Charat Singh, son of Hari Singh of Rupar. His son Kharak Singh was married to Prem Kaur, daughter of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala.

4. *Mohar Singh* commanded a contingent of 200 horse. He captured several villages in Zira tahsil of Firozpur district. On his death his widow was ejected by Diwan Mohkam Chand in 1806.

5. *Nodh Singh of Kheri* fought in the battle of Sarhind in January, 1764. He was seriously wounded, and could not go far away. He seized Kheri, a rich parganah of Ludhiana district, near Sarhind, worth Rs. 25,000 a year. He built a small fort at this place and resided there.

6. *Rae Singh of Dhirumajra* was a Kang Jat of Amritsar district. He secured 16 villages south-west of Khanna in Samralah tahsil of Ludhiana district. His family resided at Dhirumajra and Jhambumajra.

7. *Sawan Singh of Sonti* was a cousin of Dasaundha Singh and Sangat Singh, the founders of the misl. He appropriated to himself several villages around Sonti where he settled down. Later on his family shifted to Mansurwal in Firozpur district. Amloh was captured by him. Hamir Singh of Nabha attacked him and seized his parganah of Amloh containing 36 villages. Sawan Singh appealed to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, chief of the Dal Khalsa. The two parties accepted him as an arbitrator. He granted Amloh to Nabha with one-fourth of revenues in the remaining 35 villages on Chahārmi tenure or one-fourth of revenues.

8. *Sudha Singh Bajwa* captured Machhiwara, 32 kms north-east of Ludhiana and the eastern portion of Utalan parganah.

Territories

Cis-Satluj region

The Nishanwala misl had its territories in the districts of Ambala, Ludhiana and Firozpur, with its headquarters at Ambala city. It contained the following parganahs :

Ambala, Amloh, Bairampur, Chandpur, Dhari, Dhirumajra, Doraha, Ismailabad, Jhambumajra, Jhanbar, Khanna, Kharar, Lidhran, Machhiwara, Mansurpur, Morindah, Mulana, Panjokhra, Sanahwal, Sarae Lashkari Khan, Shahabad, Singhanwala, Sonti, Tharwa, Utalan, Zira.

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Jalandhar Doab

Mahilpur under Dharam Singh of Kharar and Morindah, revenues Rs. 1,61,901.

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CHAPTER 7

The Shahid Misl

Dip Singh Shahid

The founder of the Shahid misl was Dip Singh Nihang, a Sandhu Jat of Pohuwind village in Jalandhar district. He and his companions wore blue clothes and a sharp quoit round the head. On the departure of Bhai Mani Singh from Damdama, Dip Singh took charge of the sacred shrine. He visited Amritsar whenever he got an opportunity. He used to stay at a place on the bank of the holy tank where now stands Shahid Bunga. Dip Singh kept himself fully busy at Damdama in making four copies of the Adi Granth. In those days printing was unknown in the Panjab. One of his copies was placed in Akal Bunga at Amritsar. The other was kept at Anandpur. The third was retained at Damdama, and the fourth was sent to Patna. He had committed the whole granth to memory. Dip Singh was not allowed to carry on his religious studies undisturbed. Whenever the Dal Khalsa sought shelter in the region about Damdama, Dip Singh joined them. In the absence of any other great leader, the Dal Khalsa chose him as their chief. The contemporary Harcharan Das says that the Sikhs and Jats of Sarhind province chose a Daranat Shah as their ruler in 1740. It appears that this Daranat Shah was none other than Dip Singh himself. In 1757 at the battle of Dharsul he fought at the head of the Dal Khalsa on the side of Alha Singh against Bhattis. Alha Singh was so pleased with this success that he took pahul a second time from Dip Singh.

Ahmad Shah Durrani conquered the Panjab in 1752. During his fourth invasion in 1756-57, he annexed the Sarhind province, and extended his kingdom to the river Jamuna. He appointed his 11-year-old son Timur Shah, Governor of the Panjab with his commander-in-chief, Jahan Khan, to carry on the administration. He believed only in rod and rudeness. Moderation and mildness had no place in his

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system of government. He actually beat with a cane the famous Mughlani Begam, ex-governor of the Panjab, till she fell down almost unconscious. Sodhi Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur was so heavily caned that he was left half-dead. He forbade the Sikhs to visit Amritsar and to celebrate their national festivals of Baisakhi and Diwali. It was under these circumstances that Dip Singh decided to celebrate at Amritsar the Diwali which fell on 11 November, 1757.

Leaving his nephew Sada Singh in charge of Damdama, Dip Singh collected a large number of followers who were prepared to illuminate the temple and the tank at Amritsar with their life-blood. As Dip Singh passed from village to village, young men both Hindus and Sikhs joined him, and their number rose to about one thousand. They halted at Taran Taran, another sacred place of the Sikhs. Here they bathed in the holy tank and said their prayer. They tied festal ribbons round their wrists and sprinkled saffron colour on their turbans in order to prepare themselves for self-sacrifice. They gathered in a body at a place on the roadside where now a monument stands. There facing the sacred shrines of Amritsar they took a vow not to come back alive without celebrating the festival. This news was conveyed to Jahan Khan at Lahore by the officer in charge of Taran Taran subdivision. Dip Singh and his comrades arrived at Amritsar, and busied themselves in performing religious rites and ceremonies. Tahmas Khan Miskin who participated in the expedition to Amritsar, says:

"One day a paper of news from an intelligencer informed Jahan Khan that a large body of Sikhs had assembled at Chak Guru for a bath and they were causing tumult and violence. The viceroy's troops under Haji Atai Khan were out in the neighbourhood subduing the country, settling matters, and chastising them (the Sikhs). The Wazir wrote a letter to Sardar Haji Atai Khan informing him about the disturbances. He asked him to reach the Chak by a sudden march with all his troops on a certain day. He said that he would also arrive there at the appointed time in order to send this misguided sect to the dwelling place of destruction. He issued a proclamation in the city of Lahore after the manner of *vilayet* that everybody whether a servant of the State or otherwise, possessing a horse, must follow him to the battlefield. Accordingly, the Begam Sahiba (Mughlani Begam) was also asked to send all her servants under me, Tahmas Khan (Miskin). The Begam at once sent for all her attendants, numbering 25 and ordered them (to march) with me. Qasim Khan also accompanied us. Then we joined Wazir's troops, who were about 2,000 in number. By

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nightfall we arrived at Sarae Khan Khanan, which was 20 kms away from Lahore. The next day we reached a place, 8 kms on this side of the Chak. We were surprised to find that Haji Atai Khan had delayed his march in spite of strict instructions.

"The Sikhs got this intelligence and attacked us on all the four sides. The battle began and both the parties got busy in raining bullets on each other. The Sikhs closely besieged us and from every side kept the fighting hot and distressed us so much that many of our men turned to flee in desperation. The Wazir also with agility and daring tried to stop them. At that time this Miskin with two mounted troopers was with him. But the Sikhs had left no path for the fleeing soldiers to escape by. At last they returned to the army disappointed and dejected. Jahan Khan then took out his sword and wounded some of his own men who had fled saying, 'Why did you flee?' In short, we all gathered together and got busy in fighting again. The matter came to such a pass that none felt life left in him. But this Miskin displayed so much courage that nobody would believe him if he were to describe it. At this stage Haji Atai Khan arrived with a triumphant army; and the ill-natured Sikhs, who were feeling proud of their courage and fravery were defeated by the relentless swords and the ruthless guns. The wretches could not face opposition and took to flight. The victorious army gave them a close pursuit as far as Chak Guru. It was a screened place and at its door we saw five Sikh infantrymen. The heroes of our army rushed at them and put them to death. At this place Mir Nea 'matullah Khan one of the Lahore grandees, lost his life in the conflict. Then our victorious army encamped there".

The five Sikhs who put up the most ferocious fight at the door of Hari Mandar were Dip Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh,[1] Sher Singh, Dargaha Singh and Basant Singh. It was a hand-to-hand scuffle. Tahmas Khan mentions the death of only one great noble of Lahore at their hands. He must have been accompanied by a strong force, most of whom were killed by these heroes. The entrance of Hari Mandar must remind every visitor of these five martyrs whose blood washed it, and whose heads and bodies lay floating in the tank by it.

Five months later in April, 1758, Timur Shah and Jahan Khan were expelled from the Panjab by the Sikhs in combination with Adina Beg Khan and Marathas. On the eastern bank of river

[1]Gurbakhsh Singh belonged to village Lil in parganah Khem Karan.

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Chenab the Sikhs overtook the fleeing Afghans. Timur Shah and Jahan Khan managed to escape in boats to the other side of the river. The Sikhs slew most of Timur's soldiers. The property that Timur had accumulated during his administration was brought to Lahore by 20,000 Marathas and 10,000 Sikhs in several trips. Those Afghans who had been left alive were driven on foot in chains by the Sikhs to Amritsar, 155 kms distant. There they were compelled under blows and whips to clean out all the rubbish with which they had filled the tank. Afterwards most of them were beheaded at the gate of the temple and in the passage leading to it. The entire space was washed with their blood.

Karam Singh Shahid

The leadership of Shahid Misl passed on to Sudh Singh of Dukohewala village in Jalandhar district. He was killed in the Ghallughara of 1762. Karam Singh[1] a Sidhu Jat of Mahrāka village 35 kms west of Lahore succeeded him. In January, 1764, at the conquest of Sarhind province he seized a number of villages in the parganahs of Kesari and Shahzadpur in Ambala district yielding about one lakh of rupees annually. He resided at Kesari. Shahzadpur was given to his brother Dharam Singh. He died childless. His widow Mai Desan was given village Baragaon for her maintenance. Karam Singh made Shahzadpur his headquarters, but he lived for most of the time at Damdama in Bhatinda district. The gurdwara of this place had twelve villages attached to it. The annual income from these villages, about Rs. 3,600 was spent on the *langar* or free mess. Dadu, Dharampura, Kewal, Pakka, Talokewala and Tihuman are some of these villages mentioned by Giani Gian Singh. He also took possession of a few villages in Rania territory, including Khari.

In 1773 Karam Singh Shahid overran a large tract of land belonging to Zabita Khan Rohilla in the upper Ganga Doab. He sacked Nanautah on December 11,1773, "when the annalist of the misfortunes of that ill-starred place was unlucky enough to be robbed of fifteen maunds (6 quintals) of grain not to speak of many other unconsidered trifles."

Jalalabad was pillaged next. Ratan Singh Bhangu states that the attention of the Sikhs was drawn to this place by a Brahman who complained that his married daughter had been forcibly seized by

[1]Sayyid Nawazish Ali, 105, calls Karam Singh grandson (*pota*) of Dip Singh Shahid.

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Sayyid Hasan Khan, the chief of the place. The Sikhs punished the whole village. The people who resisted them were beheaded; while only those were spared who by holding grass in their mouths submitted to them. The chief was tied to a cot, and by being wrapped in straw was burnt alive. His agent, a Hindu Kalal, who helped the Sayyid by informing him of beautiful girls of the place was hanged. The Brahman's daughter was made over to her husband, and the food cooked by the girl was served to all the noted Brahmans of her husband's village. The Sikhs provided the husband with a good sum of money in order to assure good treatment for the girl.

In September, 1780, Karam Singh participated in the intestine warfare among the Sikhs. He was on the side of Baghel Singh against Bhanga Singh of Thanesar. Karam Singh with Diwan Singh at the head of 1,500 horse crossed the Jamuna at Kunjpura, and encamped on the opposite side at Ghat Makānak in the Ganga Doab. Zabita Khan was 15 kms away from them. He deputed his vakil Bilas Rae to negotiate with the Sikh chiefs. On 5 November, Bilas Rae brought the Sikh sardars to Zabita Khan's camp at Bidauli, 16 kms south-east of Karnal. The conference continued upto 9 November. No settlement was arrived at. Karam Singh possessed the parganahs of Bartha and Bankhandi in Saharanpur district, worth one lakh of rupees annually. They were taken over by the British Government in 1808.

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Gulab Singh Shahid

Karam Singh died in 1794. His eldest son, Gulab Singh, succeeded him. He was a bad ruler and poor administrator. He submitted to the British on 4 January, 1804. The Shahid misl was considered by the Sikhs as a religious body, though its members fought bravely and participated in most of the campaigns of the Dal Khalsa, both defensive and offensive. When Ranjit Singh conquered Naraingarh in 1807, he passed through Shahzadpur, 10 kms west of Naraingarh. The Shahids were held in such a great esteem that the Maharaja did not touch Shahzadpur. Karam Singh's sons, Mahtab Singh and Gulab Singh submitted to Ranjit Singh. They possessed a force of 130 horse and 100 foot.

Prominent Shahid Sardars

1. *Chuhar Singh* of village Chung near Kasur occupied Jharoli in January, 1764. He was succeeded by his minor son Mohar Singh.

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Some of his villages were captured by Bhanga Singh of Thanesar. Mohar Singh was left with Ajrana, Atari, Fatahgarh and Jharoli worth about Rs. 10,000 a year.

2. *Gurbakhsh Singh* belonged to village Gangubaha in Taran Taran tahsil of Amritsar district. He occupied a number of villages in the *Bet* tract of the Markanda river, and set up his seat at Tangaur. He was succeeded by his son Daya Singh.

3. *Natha Singh* held charge of Damdama in the absence of Karam Singh. In lieu of his faithful service he was granted the village of Ambli, 7 kms from Naraingarh towards Sadhaura.

4. *Surat Singh Akali* of Anandpur held Majri close to Shahzadpur.

Territories

The territories of the Shahid misl were situated in the districts of Ambala, Bhatinda and Firozpur. Their seats of government were at Damdama, Kesari and Shahzadpur. The following important places were included in their territory:

Ajrana, Ambli, Atari, Dadu, Damdama, Dharampura, Fatahgarh, Jharoli, Kesari, Kewal, Khari, Majri, Pakka, Shahzadpur (43 villages, worth Rs. 72,000 annually), Talokewala, Tangaur, Tihuman.

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CHAPTER 8

The End of Cis-Satluj Misls

The British conquest of Delhi and the policy of Sikh chiefs

In the second Anglo-Maratha War, Lord Lake was in charge of the campaign in northern India. He defeated the Maratha army under a French general in the battle of Patparganj on the Jamuna near Delhi on 11 September, 1803. He seized Delhi on 13 September, and the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, came under British protection. The Sikh chiefs were masters of the Delhi region and Haryana. In the battle of Delhi Bhanga Singh of Thanesar and Gurdit Singh of Ladwa had fought against the British on the side of Marathas. The other Sikh chiefs had remained neutral. This victory did not give the British any territory north of Delhi. This region was in the possession of Sikh sardars who were not under Marathas.

Of all the Sikh chiefs Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal was the first to realize that the British rule had come to stay in the country. He joined the British camp a few days after their occupation of Delhi in September. Lal Singh was on intimate friendly terms with Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. On his persuasion Bhag Singh also made submission to Lord Lake. In appreciation of Lal Singh's services, Lord Lake issued on March 7, 1804, a letter of authority confirming him in the possession of parganahs of Barsat and Faridpur.

The other Sikh sardars of Karnal and Ambala districts carried on plundering raids into the Ganga Doab which had now become a British territory. Their lawless activities continued throughout 1804. They included Bhanga Singh Karorasinghia of Thanesar, Gurdit Singh Karorasinghia of Ladwa and Karnal, Jodh Singh Karorasinghia of Chhachhrauli, Karam Singh Shahid of Shahzadpur, Rae Singh Bhangi of Jagadhri and Sher Singh Bhangi of Buriya. In December, 1804, they again gathered on the banks of

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river Jamuna. Colonel Burn was in charge of Saharanpur district. In the night of December 18, 1804, he suddenly swooped down upon the Sikh camp. In this engagement Sher Singh of Buriya, nephew of Rae Singh, was killed and the Sikh forces were dispersed.

Lal Singh and Bhag Singh decided to render active military service to the British in suppressing disorders and disturbances. They waited upon Colonel Ochterlony who was then in charge of Delhi and offered their military service to him. Colonel Burn was at that time fully occupied in the upper Ganga Doab in quelling the disturbances of Sikhs and Marathas. With a letter of introduction from Ochterlony, they joined Burn at the head of their contingents on 26 January, 1805. They were given a warm reception with suitable presents.

The other Sikhs lay encamped at Mulana in a body of 6,000. Burn with his Sikh allies marched to Mulana. The Sikh forces fled from one place to another being hotly pursued by Burn for two months. Ultimately the Sikhs dispersed to their respective places. Burn had also to clear the upper Ganga Doab from Marathas. His head-quarters were at Saharanpur. He entrusted the district to Lal Singh and Bhag Singh for maintaining peace and order in his absence. In recognition of their services Bhag Singh was given the parganah of Gohana, while the parganah of Faridpur was divided between Jind and Kaithal. Nawab Rahmat Khan of Kunjpura received seven villages.[1]

Lord Lake's Proclamation, 1805

In March, 1805, Lord Lake issued a general proclamation granting

[1]Kunjpura or Herons' Nest stood on the western bank of river Jamuna about 10 kms from Karnal. It was possessed by Rohilla Afghans of Yusafzai tribe. The real founder of family fortunes was Najabat Khan. He supported Nadir Shah. He was killed by Bhau, the commander-in-chief of Maratha forces, in 1760. His son Daler Khan was a faithful chief of Ahmad Shah Durrani. He received a grant of 150 villages from the Shah in parganahs of Bidauli, Indri, Karnal, Shahabad and Thanesar. He died in 1773. He was succeeded by Gulsher Khan who could not resist the Sikhs. In 1787 he submitted to Mahadji Sindhia. He supported Perron against George Thomas. His son Rahmat Khan succeeded him in 1801. He rendered full help to Lord Lake. A report of 1806 stated that the chiefs and people of Kunjpura were the most rebellious and insubordinate of all the people of India. They were in the habit of doing mischief. They were villains and hated peace and order. They did not submit to authority.
(Sayyid Nawazish Ali, 29).

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amnesty to all the Sikh chiefs who would not disturb British territory and would not join in any activity against the British Government. Rae Singh of Jagadhri and Gurdit Singh of Ladwa were the first to accept the offer. The other Sikh chiefs followed suit.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's three expeditions

Lord Lake's proclamation alarmed Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He aimed at uniting the whole Sikh people in the Panjab under him. This was not an impossible task, and there was every likelihood of his success in achieving this objective. In 1806, 1807 and 1808, the Maharaja led expeditions into the Cis-Satluj region. He adopted a wrong policy which frightened one and all. With the weak and innocent small chiefs, both men and women, who gave him no cause of complaint, he behaved like a wolf in the pen of goats and sheep. He eliminated them altogether. He rewarded his own men and supporters with this loot. It was not an act of bravery, chivalry, gallantry or heroism to destroy blameless, inoffensive and virtuous women chiefs, mostly of his own religion.

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First expedition, 1806

In his first expedition, Ranjit Singh crossed river Satluj on 26 July, 1806, at the head of about 20,000 horse. He was accompanied by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, and some other sardars. He went to Nabha, Patiala, Ambala and Thanesar. On his way back he seized the territories of Ghungrana from Gujar Singh, son of Tara Singh Ghaiba, Jitmal Singh of Raepur Rani and Kabul Khan. In this parganah he gavē to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa 5 villages worth Rs. 3,550, and to Jaswant Singh, Raja of Nabha, 7 villages worth Rs. 3,350. The Maharaja then captured the estates of the old Kalha family from two women, Nur-un-Nisa and Lachhmi, widows of Rae Ilyas Khan. He distributed these estates as follows:

1. Basawa Singh was given 10 villages in Jagraon and Kot, worth Rs. 5,714 annually.

2. Bhag Singh, Raja of Jind, Ranjit Singh's maternal uncle, received 54 villages including Basian, Jagraon, Jhandāla, Kot and Ludhiana, to the value of Rs. 23,260 annually.

3. Bhanga Singh of Thanesar got only one village in Talwandi worth Rs. 400 because of his haughty behaviour with the Maharaja.

4. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia obtained 106 villages in the parganahs of

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Basian, Dhaka, Jagraon, Kot and Talwandi, valued at Rs. 40,505 a year.

5. Gurdit Singh of Ladwa was granted 32 villages in Baddowal and Jagraon parganahs worth Rs. 23,540.

6. Jaswant Singh, Raja of Nabha, was allotted 31 villages in Basian, Jagraon, Kot and Talwandi worth Rs. 26,690.

7. Mohkam Chand, Diwan, his commander-in-chief, was granted 71 villages in Ghilla, Jagraon, Kot and Talwandi worth Rs. 33,945.

Second expedition, 1807

1. *Fatah Singh Ahluwalia:* In September, 1807, he came to Patiala and then went via Ambala and Shahzadpur to Naraingarh. After three weeks' hard fighting, the fort of Naraingarh was taken from Kanwar Kishan Singh of Nahan. The surrounding area including author's two home villages of Laha and Bhurewala were restored to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, valued at Rs. 12,580 a year. He further received three more villages of Jitmal Singh of Raepur Rani, worth Rs. 1,200.

2. *Raja Bhag Singh of Jind:* Jitmal Singh's other three villages in Ghungrana parganah worth Rs. 2,225 were given to Raja Bhag Singh of Jind. He was also assigned Morindah estate of Dharam Singh consisting of 27 villages.

3. *Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha:* One village of Ghungrana worth Rs. 315 was assigned to Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha.

4. *Karam Singh Nagla*: The remaining 36 villages of Ghungrana valued at Rs. 23,415 were allotted to Karam Singh of Nagla. The Ghungrana chief, Gujar Singh, son of Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia, fled to Patiala where his brother was married to a Patiala princess.

5. *Diwan Mohkam Chand*: was granted Zira seized from the widow of Mohar Singh Nishanwala, containing 12 villages worth Rs. 7,500. The Diwan further obtained 77 villages of Kot Kapura taken from Jagat Singh of Buriya, valued at Rs. 61,400. He also got 12 villages of Tara Singh Ghaiba in Dharamkot parganah.

6. *Garbha Singh Singhpuria of Bharatgarh:* The remaining 62 villages of Dharamkot worth Rs. 22,634, were bestowed upon Garbha Singh of Bharatgarh.

7. *Dulha or Dulcha Singh of Radaur:* got one village worth Rs. 70.

8. *Atar Singh of Dharamkot:* obtained a couple of villages valued at Rs. 3,000.

9. *Rani Sada Kaur Kanhiya:* The district of Wadni was confiscated

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from Mian Nudan. It was granted to Maharaja's mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, who was required to pay Rs. 15,000 annually into the Lahore treasury. She established herself in the fort of Patoki.

The Sikh chiefs seek British protection, March, 1808

This policy caused dread and panic among all the Cis-Satluj chiefs. They firmly believed that their turn for extermination was to come sooner or later, and they were perfectly justified in this presumption. Ranjit Singh's maternal uncle took the lead to save himself. In March, 1808, Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Lal Singh of Kaithal, Chain Singh, the confidential agent of Patiala, Rae Singh of Jagadhri and Dulha Singh of Radaur waited on Archibald Seton, British Resident at Delhi, and sought safety from the British Government, against Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Meanwhile Ranjit Singh's general, Diwan Mohkam Chand was busy in making further conquests for his master. He had reduced Faridkot, Sanahwal, Jhandbar, Bahrampur, Chandpur and Dhari, all worth Rs. 50,000 a year. Ranjit Singh confirmed these places on the Diwan.

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Third expedition, 1808

Ranjit Singh's third expedition began towards the close of September, 1808, when he crossed river Satluj near Firozpur. Faridkot quietly submitted. The Nawab of Malerkotla became tributary. Rani Daya Kaur of Ambala was deprived of all her estates and property. Tribute was realized from the sons of Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad. He made grants to the following persons with the net annual income as noted against their name:

1. Atar Singh of Dharamkot, Rs. 980.
2. Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, Rs. 250.
3. Jaswant Singh of Nabha, Rs. 3,827.
4. Jodh Singh Kalsia, Rs. 10,000.
5. Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Rs. 42,000.

The Maharaja returned to Amritsar on 4 December, 1808. On 12 December, Charles Metcalfe, the British envoy, sent to Ranjit Singh the note of the Governor-General, which clearly stated that the Cis-Satluj chiefs "are, and will remain under the protection of the British Government."

Conquests of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the Cis-Satluj region

(A) From Women Rulers

1. Ambala, Rani Daya Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Nishanwala, lost all her 111 villages and all movable property.
2. Basian, widow of Mian Ghaus, 8 villages.
3. Chhalondi, Ram Kaur, widow of Baghel Singh Karorasinghia, 18 villages.
4. Dharamkot, Rani Ratan Kaur, widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba Dallewalia, 12 villages.
5. Jagraon, Rani Lachhmi, widow of Rae Ilyas, 49 villages.
6. Kalawar, Rani Ratan Kaur, second widow of Baghel Singh Karorasinghia, 9 villages.
7. Khanna, Rani Raepuri, 10 villages.
8. Ludhiana, Rani Nur-un-Nisa, widow of Rae Ilyas, 279 villages.
9. Raepur Rani, Rani of this place was deprived of several villages.
10. Sarae Lashkari Khan, Sobhrai, widow of Anup Singh, all villages.
11. Zira, Bhāgān, widow of Mohar Singh Nishanwala, 12 villages.

(B) From Sardars

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1. Faridkot, Gulab Singh, 21 villages.
2. Ghungrana, Gujar Singh son of Tara Singh Ghaiba, and two partners Jitmal Singh of Raepur Rani and Kabul Khan Pathan of Malerkotla, 49 villages.
3. Kharar, son of Dharam Singh Nishanwala, 27 villages.
4. Kot Kapura, Jagat Singh of Buriya, 77 villages.
5. Machhiwara, Ran Singh and Nadaun Singh, 8 villages.
6. Morindah, son of Dharam Singh Nishanwala, 27 villages.
7. Naraingarh, Kanwar Kishan Singh of Nahan, 41 villages.
8. Raepur Rani, Jitmal Singh, 3 villages.
9. Rahimabad, Rao Muhammad Khan, 48 villages.

Chiefs owing allegiance to Ranjit Singh

The following chiefs owed allegiance to Maharaja Ranjit Singh:

1. Awankot, Budh Singh Faizullahpuria, annual revenues Rs. 54,000.
2. Bhanohad (Bharog ?), Nand Singh Ahluwalia.
3. Bharatgarh, Garbha Singh Faizullahpuria, Rs. 53,000.
4. Chhachhrauli, Jodh Singh Karorasinghia, Rs. 57,000.
5. Dukheri, Bhag Singh Ghilja of Nishanwala misl.
6. Dharamkot, Atar Singh Dallewalia, Rs. 40,000.

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7. Doraha, Charat Singh Nishanwala.
8. Faridkot, Gulab Singh Phulkian, Rs. 35,000.
9. Firozpur, Dhanna Singh Bhangi, Rs. 40,000.
10. Ghungrana, Karam Singh, Rs. 25,000.
11. Jagraon, Fatah Singh Ahluwalia, Rs. 1,76,000.
12. Jatwar near Shahzadpur, Jawahar Singh Ahluwalia, Rs. 77,200.
13. Kesri, Gulab Singh Shahid.
14. Khamanon, on the Ludhiana-Chandigarh road, Natha Singh Dallewalia, Rs. 25,000.
15. Kharar, Dharam Singh Nishanwala, Rs. 20,000.
16. Machhiwara, Sodhi Charat Singh, Rs. 20,000.
17. Makhowal, Sodhi Surjan Singh, Rs. 77,600.
18. Malodh, Dalel Singh Phulkian.
19. Mudki, Karam Singh.
20. Palasian, Ram Saran Singh, Rs. 32,000.
21. Rahimabad, Mohkam Chand, Diwan, Rs. 1,60,500.
22. Ramgarh, Jitmal Singh.
23. Rupar, Bhup Singh Dallewalia, Rs. 53,000.
24. Sarhind, Jai Singh.
25 Shahzadpur, Mahtab Singh Shahid, Rs. 72,000.
26. Sialba, Deva Singh Dallewalia.
27. Talwandi Mallian, Mohan Singh.
28. Tibba, Dalel Singh.
29. Tihara, Gujar Singh.
30. Wadni, Mian Nudan.
31. Some petty chieftains, Rs. 1,40,000.

Total amount of revenues, Rs. 13,32,500.
Total military force, 7,000.

Ochterlony's proclamation to Sikh chiefs, 9 February, 1809

After the occupation of Delhi in 1803, Delhi and Gurgaon were directly administered by the British. A little later the districts of Rohtak, Hisar and Sirsa were also taken under British administration. For the remaining districts of Karnal, Ambala, Ludhiana and Phulkian and other states Colonel Ochterlony issued two proclamations on 9 February, 1809, on behalf of the Governor-General. One was addressed to the Sikh chiefs in the Cis-Satluj region. It said:

1. The territories of the Sikh chiefs lying between the rivers Satluj and the Jamuna have been taken under British protection.

2. The British Government will not charge any tribute (*peshkash*

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or nazarana) from chiefs and princes of this region.

3. The British Government will protect their rights and authority as enjoyed by them up to now.

4. The chiefs and sardars thus protected shall furnish supplies of grain and other necessaries which may be demanded for the British troops while passing through their territory or stationed there.

5. In case of invasion of their country the chiefs will join the British with their troops whenever called upon. (The number of troops was not fixed).

6. European goods on their way to Ludhiana while passing through their territories will be charged no transit duties and will be given full protection.

7. Similarly horses for the cavalry in their passage through the Cis-Satluj country must be exempted from all taxes and given full protection.

Ochterlony's proclamation to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 9 February, 1809

1. The British army lies encamped near the frontiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

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2. The sole object and aim of the British Government is to confirm friendship with the Maharaja.

3. The friendship between the two states depends on the following conditions :

(a) "The Thanas in the fortresses of Kharar, Khanpur, and other places on this side of the river Sutlej, which have been placed in the hands of the dependants of the Maharaja, shall be razed, and the same places restored to their ancient possessers."

(b) "The force of cavalry and infantry which may have crossed to this side of the Sutlej must be recalled to the other side, to the country of the Maharaja."

(c) The troops stationed at the Ghat of Phillaur must return to the western side of river Satluj. In future the troops of the Maharaja shall never advance into the territory of Cis-Satluj chiefs, "who have called in for their security and protection Thanas of the British Government." If a small Thana is "stationed at the Ghat of Phillaur, it will not be objected to."

(d) "In case of non-compliance with these stipulations, then shall it be plain that the Maharaja has no regard for the friendship of the British, but, on the contrary, resolves on enmity. In such

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case the victorious British army shall commence every mode of defence."

Proclamation of protection to Cis-Satluj States against Lahore, 3 May, 1809

After the treaty of Amritsar on 25 April, 1809, between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British Government, Ochterlony issued a proclamation approved by the Governor-General, on May 3, 1809, for the protection of Cis-Satluj states against Lahore. It stated:

1. The chiefs of Malwa and Sarhind south of river Satluj have been taken under British protection. In future they have been secured from the authority and influence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
2. All these chiefs are exempted from all pecuniary tribute to the British Government.
3. The chiefs shall enjoy the same rights and authority as before.
4. If a British force marches through their country, they shall furnish supplies of grain and other necessary things required by them.
5. In case of agression by an enemy, the chiefs shall join the British army with all their forces and exert themselves fully in expelling it.
6. All European articles passing through their territory for the use of the army shall not be subjected to molestation and any duty.
7. All horses purchased for cavalry regiments while passing through their territories shall be free from molestation and any duty.

Chieftains taken under British protection between the Jamuna and the Satluj in 1809

1. Ambala, Rani Daya Kaur, Revenues Rs. 1,37,000, military force 550 men.
2. Buriya, Bhagwan Singh, Rs. 2,17,200, troops 825.
3. Jind, Raja Bhag Singh, Rs. 2,89,000, troops 2,000.
4. Kaithal, Bhai Lal Singh, Rs. 3,91,564, troops 2,900.
5. Kunjpura, Rahmat Khan, Rs. 89,008, troops 800.
6. Ladwa, Gurdit Singh, Rs. 2,17,550, troops 930.
7. Malerkotla, Ataullah Khan, Rs. 40,000, troops 400.
8. Malodh, Dalel Singh, Rs. 52,000, troops 300.
9. Manimajra, Gopal Singh, Rs. 79,000, troops 500.
10. Nabha, Raja Jaswant Singh, Rs. 2,04,700, troops 1,200.
11. Patiala, Raja Sahib Singh, Rs. 8,36,500, troops 4,700.

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12. Radaur, Dulcha Singh, Rs. 76,900, troops 300.
13. Shahabad Markanda, sons of Karam Singh, Rs. 65,000, troops 400.
14. Thanesar, Bhanga Singh, Rs. 1,20,000, troops 550.
15. Petty chieftains such as Manauli, Rs..4,00,000, troops 600.

Total revenues Rs. 29,15,422.
Military force 17,959.

Proclamation of Protection of Cis-Satluj chiefs against one another, dated 22 August, 1811

1. It was re-affirmed that the sardars of Sarhind and Malwa had come under British protection, that the British Government had no intention of claiming any tribute, that the British Government wished them to continue in the full control and enjoyment of their respective possessions.

The proclamation declared that the British officers posted in this country had received certain complaints. For instance:

(a) On 15 June, 1811, Dilawar Ali Khan of Samana complained to the Resident of Delhi that the officers of Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala had seized his jewellery and other property. The British Resident replied that Samana was situated in Patiala State and the complaint should be made to Raja Sahib Singh.

(b) On 12 July, 1811, Dasaundha Singh and Gurmukh Singh complained to Colonel Ochterlony, Agent to the Governor-General, that their brother Sardar Charat Singh was not giving them their shares of property. The Colonel in his reply stated that during the past three years no claim had been preferred against Charat Singh by any one of them, and the policy of the British Government was not to interfere with the Sardars. So the petition could not be entertained.

An assurance to the Cis-Satluj chiefs was again given that complaints made against them to the officers of the British Government would be "of no avail."

In the beginning the British officers found that there were numerous unsettled quarrels. The greatest difficulty arose over the territories held by many in common. In a number of cases villages were held in halves or even fourthed called *chaharmis*. In course of time they were adjusted.

2. It was discovered that several Sardars had after 1809 proclamation wrested the estates of others, and had deprived them of their

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lawful possessions. The British authorities ordered restoration of such estates. The usurpers delayed compliance "until detachments of the British army had been sent to effect restitution". This happened "in the case of the Rani of Tirah, the Sikhs of Chulian, the Talukas of Karauli and Chehloundy, and the village of Chiba."

The British Government's order in such cases was to restore lands and property immediately before any complaint was made to them. When a complaint of this nature was received, the offending party would have to restore the property, to pay the revenues of the estate from the date of ejection of the lawful proprietor together with the losses the inhabitants of that place had sustained from the march of troops, and a penalty for disobedience of orders.

From 1809 to 1845 upto the time of the First Anglo-Sikh War, the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs enjoyed complete peace and security. They were allowed to exercise full authority in all civil, criminal and fiscal matters. The British Government did not interfere in their domestic and internal affairs.

For example Gurdit Singh of Ladwa suspected a woman of his establishment and a young man being in clandestine love affair. He had the woman's nose cut off, and chopped off both the hands of the youth. The Sardars of Shahabad executed an old woman for witch-craft. The British authorities did not interfere as that was entirely their right.

The British Government only insisted again and again upon the chiefs on maintaining good government in their own domains. The individual police departments of small states were abolished. The customs duties were stopped to encourage trade and commerce. The payment of revenues was made in cash.

The political authorities

From 1803 to 1821 the political relations with the protected and independent states in the Cis-Satluj region were determined by the Resident at Delhi. In 1821 this duty was assigned to Agent to the Governor-General and Superintendent of Protected and Hill States with his headquarters at Ambala. His summer official residence was at Kasauli in the hills. In 1840 the Agent was also given charge of north-west frontiers. After the first Sikh war in 1846 the Cis-Satluj States were placed under the control of Cis-Satluj Commissioner at Ambala. In 1849 the new province of Panjab was created, and the Board of Administration took over charge of the Cis-Satluj States. In

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1858 a Lieutenant Governor was appointed for the Panjab and the Cis-Satluj Commissioner became Commissioner of Ambala Division. He became the intermediary between these states and the Panjab Government. The Ambala Division became Delhi Division in 1884, and the control of these States reverted to Delhi Commissioner. In 1900 a Political Agent took charge of these states with his headquarters at Ambala, but who shifted to Patiala in 1902. It was known as Phulkian States Agency which included Bahawalpur State also in 1903.

In addition to native states there were five British districts, Thanesar consisting of Kaithal and Ladwa, Ambala, Ludhiana, Wadni later on Firozpur and Simla containing hilly areas.

Extinction of Cis-Satluj Sikh Misls Adventures

H.M.L. Lawrence wrote in 1840:

"The whole system of the Sikhs is unfavourable to multiplication of their race; continual feuds must cut off great numbers, and their habits are uncongenial to fruitfulness; there probably is not a more dissolute race on the face of the earth; and though, by their active habits, some do live to good old age, yet most are childless, and a large family is never found; I should loosely estimate the population of the Panjab at about a quarter of a million of Sikhs, half a million of Musalmans and three-quarters of a million of Hindus."[1]

As the Sikh sardars of various misls or their *Ranis* died without a male issue, the British Government claimed those territories in the capacity of feudal superiors. It asserted its right to be the ultimate heir to all lapses. The collaterals descending from a common ancestor were allowed to succeed to the whole territory, but after a parting of the branches of the family one could not go to another branch, and lapsed to the British Government on failure of direct heirs.

Their territories were added to the British districts. Among the large estates under escheat were Ambala, Dayalgarh, Firozpur, Kaithal, Mustafabad, Radaur and Thanesar. In 1845 at the commencement of first Anglo-Sikh War all the territories of the Lahore Durbar situated south of river Satluj were incorporated in the district of Firozpur. In 1846 the possessions of the Ahluwalia chief in the Cis-Satluj region were seized. The estates of Ladwa were also taken in that year. A few years later all the surviving smaller states were

[1]H.M.L. Lawrence, I, 85.

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deprived of power, and their territories were brought under complete British control. The rulers were converted into landlords. This was bad faith indeed. The British plea was that in the first Anglo-Sikh War they did not actively support the British Government. The Contemporary Sir George Campbell wrote:

"We reduced the small and spared the great. Nabha, which certainly behaved very ill, and was sentenced to a penal loss of territory, was allowed to retain power, when the smaller states, good and bad, were all reduced." In this way the larger Protected States were entirely surrounded by British territories.

Sikh women rulers in the Cis-Satluj region

During the misl period the Sikh sardars were often busy in warfare. In their absence or negligence their women carried on the administration with the help of their Hindu Diwans most successfully. The women rulers were easily accessible to their subjects. They personally looked into the grievances of the people. They maintained perfect peace and order. In an emergency they led their troops in the battlefield and fought bravely. If their commanders showed relaxation while fighting, they harangued their soldiers, and tauntingly offered a petticoat (*lahnga*) to the delinquents and put them to shame. This brought about the desired result.

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The contemporary writer William Francklin says:

"The instances indeed have not unfrequently occurred in which they have actually taken up arms to defend their habitations from the desultory attacks of the enemy, and throughout the contest behaved themselves with an intrepidity of spirit, highly praiseworthy".

The administration by Sikh women had one good result that the masses were thoroughly satisfied and contented. But it had a bad effect also. The sardars found that their sardarnis were ruling efficiently and skilfully. They stopped taking interest in administration and spent their time in excessive drinking and debauchery, and more often than not they died young or failed to have a male child.

The following were the notable women rulers in the Cis-Satluj region :

1. Ambala, Rani Daya Kanwar, wife of Gurbakhsh Singh.
2. Baragaon, near Shahzadpur in Ambala district. Desan, widow of Dharam Singh Shahid.
3. Barwala, near Dera Basi, Lalan.

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4. Bharog, near Ambala Cantonment, Sada Kaur, widow of Jawahar Singh.

5. Bilaspur, in Ambala district, Daya Kaur.

6. Buriya, Nand Kanwar, widow of Jaimal Singh.

7. Chhalondi, Ram Kanwar, widow of Baghel Singh.

8. Dayalgarh, Rani Sukhan.

9. Dhanaurah, Raj Kanwar.

10. Dharamkot, Rani Ratan Kaur, widow of Tara Singh Ghaiba.

11. Dhin, Ratan Kaur alias Bhagbhari, widow of Mansa Singh Sodhi.

12. Firozpur, Lachhman Kanwar, widow of Dhanna Singh and daughter of Rae Singh Bhangi of Jagadhri. She kept in check the Dogar and Nepal tribes, a pastoral people given to thieving and cattle-lifting. They resided in the neighbourhood of Kasur and Firozpur, and along the southern bank of the Satluj.

13. Gadauli near Sadhaura, Basant Kaur, widow of Ram Singh Karorasinghia.

14. Jagadhri, Daya Kaur, widow of Bhagwan Singh.

15. Kaithal, Rani Bhāgān, widow of Desu Singh.

16. Kakrala, Bhagbhari, widow of Karam Singh, first cousin of Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal. She died in 1819.

17. Kalawar, Rani Ratan Kaur, widow of Baghel Singh Karora-singhia.

18. Khamanon, near Ludhiana, Khem Kanwar, wife of Desu Singh Kakar.

19. Khanna, Daya Kaur, wife of Hari Singh, nephew of Raja Bhag Singh of Jind.

20. Khanna (a part of it), Rani Raepuri wife of Jitmal Singh (near Naraingarh).

21. Mubarikpur (Ghaggar), Rup Kaur, widow of Sobha Singh.

22. Mulana, Rup Kanwar, widow of Lal Singh of Ambala.

23. Mustafabad, Gauran, widow of Jodh Singh.

24. Nabha, Rani Deso, wife of Raja Hamir Singh, who during her husband's captivity fought bravely and saved the state from annihi-lation.

25. Nihalwala, Dharmo, widow of Daya Singh.

26. Nihalwala, Rajindar, widow of Daya Singh.

27. Patiala, Rani Hukman, grand-mother of Raja Sahib Singh, a great ruler and saviour of the State.

28. Patiala, Rani Rajindar, the Patiala Princess, married at

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Phagwara, saved Patiala state from disintegration.

29. Patiala, Rani Sahib Kaur, the Patiala Princess, married at Fatahgarh, served most successfully as prime minister of Patiala state.

30. Pehowa, Ratan Kaur.

31. Radaur, Anand Kanwar, widow of Dulha or Dulcha Singh.

32. Rupar, Raj Kanwar, daughter of Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad Markanda, and widow of Charat Singh, son of Hari Singh.

33. Sabka, near Shahabad Markanda, widow of Bakhshish Singh.

34. Sarae Lashkari Khan, Sobhrai, widow of Anup Singh.

35. Shahabac Markanda, Mahan Kaur, widow of Karam Singh Nirmala.

36. Sialba, Rājān, widow of Hari Singh.

37. Talwandi Bhai, Daryai, widow of Mohar Singh Nishanwala.

38. Thanesar, Hāsān, widow of Bhanga Singh, who controlled the state after the death of her only son Fatah Singh in 1819.

39. Zira, Bhāgān, widow of Mohar Singh Nishanwala who offerred a heroine's battle to Diwan Mohkam Chand in 1806.

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CHAPTER 9

The Phulkian States

Not a Sikh Misl

Most of the writers on Sikh history have included the Phulkian States as one of the Sikh misls. In reality they were never a Sikh misl. Guru Gobind Singh was the originator of Sikh misls. He spent most of his lifetime in the Cis-Satluj region. Here he fought about a score of battles against the Mughals, and their supporters the hill rajas. No Phulkian sardar joined Guru Gobind Singh or gave him any help in his war against them. When Banda Bahadur came to Malwa, the Sikhs and Hindus came in batches to join him. No Phulkian sardar supported him. According to Gian Singh[1], Ram Singh, Talok Singh, Alha Singh, Hamir Singh and Sukhchain Singh offered no help to Banda for fear of offending the Delhi Government. They sent some men secretly to serve under him. This was due to the fact that Banda was to punish the governor of Sarhind in whose destruction all the Phulkian sardars were deeply interested on account of political and religious considerations.

In the Sikh organisation of 1734 into Budha Dal and Taruna Dal no Phulkian man was represented. In 1748 there was no Phulkian group in the Dal Khalsa. They never attended any Gurmata held at Amritsar. They did not adopt the method of the misls of distributing booty and territory among their followers. They followed the practice of the Mughals of appropriating the entire booty and territory to themselves and rewarding their men with payment in cash, kind or jagirs. The Majha Sikhs waged a deadly war against the Mughals and the Durranis. The Phulkian chiefs submitted and served them. Their highest aim was to get titles both from the Mughal Emperors and the Durrani Kings. They issued their coins in the

[1]*Shamsher Khalsa*, part II, p. 9.

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names of the rulers of Delhi, Kandhar and Kabul, and not in the names of Gurus. In the whole eighteenth century, no Phulkian ruler visited Amritsar or Anandpur, while there are many references when they personally paid homage to the Mughal Emperor, Alamgir II, and Ahmad Shah Durrani. They paid tribute and always made submission to the Mughals and the Durranis and afterwards placed themselves under the British. They always supported their Muslim masters.

This may be due to the fact that they were nearer to Delhi and there was no big river to be crossed to reach Patiala, Nabha and Jind. Hence they could easily be subdued. They submitted to the Durrani as Patiala lay almost on the direct road between Delhi and Lahore. Further, they believed in loyalty, religiously to Sikhism and politically to the greatest power of the day. They kept religion and politics apart. They were opposed to the Dal Khalsa. Whenever they joined the Dal Khalsa, it was to extend their own territory or to save themselves from their enemies. The Phulkian states came into being at the same time as the Sikh misls, but they formed an independent group of their own. As a matter of fact the Phulkian states were kingdoms in miniature, and they had absolutely nothing to do with the Sikh war of independence against Mughals and Afghans.

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THE PHULKIAN STATES

The Phulkian states had descended from their common ancestor, Phul, a Sidhu Brar Jat of village Maharaj. The Sidhu clan is found between the Ravi and the Jamuna, but it was the most powerful tribe south of the Satluj. In the Trans-Satluj area the Sidhu families existed at Atari, Bhilowal, Saurian and Sidhuwal. In the Cis-Satluj region the Sidhus were the rulers at Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Arnauli, Badrukhan, Bhadaur, Dayalpur, Jhumba, Jiundan, Kot Dhuna, Laudgharia, Malod and Rampur. The Phulkian chiefs played a very important role in Sikh history. The Phulkian families were originally equal and independent of one another. The Patiala state was the most powerful of all these.

The Cis-Satluj region

The Cis-Satluj region lay between river Jamuna on the east and river Satluj in the west. For administration it was divided among three provinces of Delhi, Lahore and Multan. Its two divisions of Sarhind and Hisar were included in Delhi province. Kot Kapura,

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Faridkot, Firozpur and the Lakhi Jungle were under Lahore. The Abohar zone formed a part of Multan province. The Phulkian States were under Delhi.

THE PATIALA STATE

Raja Alha Singh, 1714-1765

Alha Singh was the founder of the Patiala state. He was the grandson of Phul, and the third son of Rama. As to his date of birth there are different versions. Atar Singh of Bhadaur says he was born in 1681. Muhammad Hasan puts his birth in 1695. The most acceptable date is 1691. He was born at village Phul. According to Atar Singh of Bhadaur, Alha Singh was married at the age of two to Fatto,[1] daughter of Chaudhri Kala[2] of village Kaleke.

In 1714 Alha Singh succeeded to the ownership of a few villages in the Bāhiyā country or a territory consisting of twenty-two villages in Bhatinda district. He was surrounded on all sides by powerful people and he had to rise against great opposition from them. To his north lived Dhaliwals, Isa Khan Manj and Raeke. Isa Khan Manj was so powerful that he was even defying the Panjab viceroy. In the south Alha Singh was hemmed in by lawless Bhattis of Bhatinda, Sirsa and Fatahabad. To the east was the governor of Sarhind, and in the south were "Mārkhor Brārs", so called by Karam Singh historian.

Alha Singh was living at Rampura Phul, 33 kms from Bhatinda. He gathered around him a band of dashing and daring young men. To arouse enthusiasm of his followers, Alha engaged musicians who sang stirring songs of Rajput heroes like Alha, Udal, Jaimal, Fatta, Amar Singh and Dulla Bhatti. The inspired youth became great warriors. In 1722 Alha set up his headquarters at Barnala, 32 kms farther east. In 1723 the number of his villages stood at thirty.

[1]A Persian manuscript, entitled *Hālāt Rajagan Patiala* states that Kala was opposed to the birth of the girl. He placed the newly born baby in an earthen jar and buried it under ground. Just at that moment Bhai Dayal Das, a saint, visited his house. He prevailed upon Kala to bring back the girl. She was found safe and sound.

[2]Atar Singh Bhadauria says that Fatto was the daughter of Chaudhri Sarān of village Mat Bhulran.

Kirpal Singh in his book *A Short Life Sketc of Maharaj Alha Singh*, 1953 edn., p. 2, calls her father Khanan. I have followed Karam Singh, state historian of Patiala.

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The battle of Thikriwala, C. 1730

At Barnala Chaudhri Vir Bhan of village Sanghera joined him. This considerably strengthened Alha. About this time Isa Khan Manj was killed in a battle by Abdus Samad Khan, viceroy of the Panjab. This emboldened Alha and his men. They began to extend their ravages into the villages of Rae Kalha[1] of Raekot and Jagraon. He controlled the whole area lying south of river Satluj between Rupar and Firozpur. Rae Kalha's wife's brother was Sondhe Khan of village Mina. On Sondhe Khan's death Alha annexed Mina. Rae Kalha was enraged. He could not tolerate the rising power of a non-Muslim. He organised a confederacy of all the Muslim chiefs of the neighbourhood comprising Manj leader, Jamal Khan[2] of Maler-

[1]Rai Kalha died in 1775. Rae Ahmad succeeded him. He passed away in 1790. His son Rai Ilyas ruled from 1790 to 1802. Begam Nur-un-Nisa governed after him. Her territory was often plundered by Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, Ahmad Gujar, Bhanga Singh of Thanesar and Sahib Singh Bedi of Una. In 1807 the whole territory of Raekian was seized by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He gave Ludhiana to his maternal uncle Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Baddowal to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, Raekot and Jagraon to Fatah Singh Ahluwalia.

[2]Jamal Khan was in continuous conflict with Alha Singh and other Sikh chiefs. He joined Zain Khan in repelling the Sikh attack on Sarhind in 1761. He was slain in an attempt to recover Rupar.

On his death chiefship passed to his eldest son, Bhikhan Khan who died in 1764. His brother, Bahadur Khan, succeeded him. Bhikhan Khan's two sons were minor. Their mother did not consent to this arrangement, and a period of civil war resulted, during which Bahadur Khan found himself stripped by Phulkian chiefs of all their possessions, with the exception of a few villages in the immediate vicinity of Malerkotla. Many of these were recovered later on by Umar Khan, brother of Bahadur Khan. Umar Khan succeeded in composing the family quarrel, and made peace with Amar Singh of Patiala through the intervention of chief of Rackot. Umar Khan died in 1778. Asadullah Khan ruled from 1778 to 1782. Ataullah Khan was the chief from 1782 to 1810. Bedi Sahib Singh of Una declared a holy war against the Afghans of Malerkotla for killing cows. Another reason was that its old Nawab, Sher Muhammad Khan, had forcibly admitted into his harem a woman of Guru Gobind Singh's household; probably a younger sister of Mata Jito. The Bedi sacked Malerkotla. Ataullah invited help from Patiala. When Patiala army approached, the Bedi retired. Ataullah Khan joined General Lake in his campaigns against the Marathas in 1803, and remained with him in the field until the British victory at Laswari.

In 1808 Maharaja Ranjit Singh demanded an indemnity of one and a half lakhs of rupees from him. One lakh was immediately paid. For half lakh five villages were mortgaged to the Maharaja. He established his military post in Malerkotla and left his tax-collectors to recover the money from the State. Malerkotla came under British protection in 1809, and Sikh officials of military post were removed.

The annual income of Malerkotla was Rs. 40,000 and cavalry 400.

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kotla, Daler Khan of Halwara and Asad Ali Khan, governor of the Jalandhar Doab. The combined forces marched towards Barnala.

Alha Singh got timely information through his intelligencers. At that time the Mājha Sikhs were roaming in the desert about Bhatinda. Kapur Singh was their leader. Alha waited upon him and sought his help. Both the forces met near Thikriwala village. Asad Ali Khan was slain, and his troops fled away. Others followed suit. A lot of goods, war material and many horses fell into the hands of Alha. This brilliant victory raised his status, and he came to be looked upon as one of the important chiefs of the Cis-Satluj region.

First baptism by Kapur Singh

According to Ratan Singh Bhangu,[1] Alha took pahul from Kapur Singh. As the Sikhs were leading a life of poverty, Alha Singh offered to pay Kapur Singh a certain amount of tribute every year. Alha Singh did not keep long hair before this. He was only a Sikh of Guru Nanak. He was the first in Phulkian family to become a Singh of Guru Gobind Singh. In memory of this victory he laid a big well to supply drinking water to the Majhails whenever they visited Thikriwala village.

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Foundation of Patiala

Alha Singh studied the political situation, and realized that in the west Ahmad Shah Durrani had conquered the Panjab, and his kingdom extended up to the Satluj. Besides the Dal Khalsa was creating disturbances. In the east and south the country was under the Mughals whose power was rapidly declining. He decided to try his luck first to the east and then to the south. He despatched his trusted lieutenant as well as his wife's cousin, Gurbakhsh Singh Kaleke to Sanaur, nearly 100 kms from Barnala. The parganah of Sanaur formed a unit of 84 villages called Chaurasi. Its chief was Muhammad Sālāh Khokhar.[2] He submitted without any fighting. This took place in 1752.

Near Sanaur about 5 kms north-west there was a large tract full of mango groves and orchards of guvavas and *ber* trees. This tract

[1] *Panth Prakash*, 268; Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 587, and Muhammad Hasan, *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 127, fo.

[2] Gian Singh in his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, 676, calls him Ata Muhammad Khan. I have followed *Waqa-e-Khandan Rajagan Patiala* and Sayyid Muhammad Latif.

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belonged to Sodhi Khatris, and it had a small habitation of Man Jat cultivators. It was called Patti Sodhian. Gurbakhsh Singh felt deeply attracted towards this fruit-bearing expanse. In 1753, he captured a mud fort known as Sodhian di Garhi. The area was afterwards called by the people Patti Alha which became Patiala. The place began to develop. At the conquest of Sarhind province by the Sikhs in January, 1764, Alha Singh obtained possession of the town of Sarhind, about 30 kms from Patiala. He made no attempt to rebuild the town of Sarhind, because it was a damned city in the eyes of the Sikhs. The Dal Khalsa was not interested in its reconstruction. On the contrary they wanted to see it in ruins. Hence Alha Singh removed most of the inhabitants of Sarhind to the new town of Patiala, where he shifted his capital from Barnala in February, 1764.[1] (Magh Shudi 10, Samvat 1820.)

War with Bhattis

The Bhattis were formerly Hindu Rajputs. During the Sultanate period they were converted to Islam. They were a warlike and ferocious people. In order to keep them under control, the Delhi Sultans had erected four forts on the four corners of the Bhatti country. They were situated at Sirsa, Bhatner, Abohar and Bhatinda (Bhatian da adda). Their territory was almost a quadrangle each side being about 80 kms long. Outside this solid belt, there were many Bhatti chieftains here and there in the Cis-Satluj region.

Alha Singh was no match for them in the battlefield. But he was far superior to them in diplomacy. He took full advantage of his religious bond with the Dal Khalsa which also needed his help during their wanderings. With their support he captured Samana, 25 kms south of Patiala from Farid Khan Bhatti. In the summer of 1757 Alha Singh was waging a war against Muhammad Amin Khan Bhatti of Rania. The engagement at Akalgarh ended in a draw. Luckily for him a part of the Dal Khalsa, driven away by Jahan Khan, was roaming about in the Lakhi Jungle. Alha Singh sought help from them. The Bhatti chief was joined by the Mughal governor of Hisar. In the battle of Dharsul the enemy forces were repulsed with heavy losses. The Bhatti parganahs of Budhlada, Dharsul,

[1]Gian Singh in his *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 679, says that the foundation of Patiala fort was laid in November, 1759, (13 Kartik, Samvat 1816) when it was made his capital. In December, 1760, when Ahmad Shah Durrani sent a force to punish Alha Singh for helping Marathas at Panipat, Barnala was his capital.

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Jamalpur, Shikarpur and Tohana fell into Alha Singh's possession. The Sikhs sacked Hisar.

Muhammad Amin Khan was determined to recover his lost territory. In 1757 Ahmad Shah Durrani had appointed Abdus Samad Khan Mohmandzai of Hashtnagar, near Peshawar, governor of Sarhind. Muhammad Amin Khan married his daughter to him to strengthen himself against Alha Singh. The combined armies of both these chiefs marched against Patiala in September, 1757. Alha Singh again approached the Dal Khalsa which was still living near Damdama under the leadership of Dip Singh. In a three-day battle at village Rampura near Akalgarh the situation remained fluid. Then the Sikhs delivered a heavy onslaught at night. The Bhattis gave way and fled away. Abdus Samad fled back to Sarhind after heavy losses. It was a grand success.

Second baptism by Dip Singh Shahid

Alha Singh wished to honour the leader of the Dal Khalsa. According to Karam Singh[1], state historian of Patiala, Alha Singh took pahul, a second time from Dip Singh Shahid.

Abdus Samad Khan wanted to punish Alha Singh. He began to plunder Patiala villages. Skirmishes took place occasionally. He besieged Alha Singh's fort of Sunam 70 kms from Patiala, and imposed a fine on him. On the approach of Maratha army, Abdus Samad hurriedly settled terms with Alha Singh, and returned to Sarhind on 12 January, 1758. The Marathas helped by the Dal Khalsa and Adina Beg Khan besieged Sarhind on 8 March, 1758. The fort of Sarhind was captured, and Abdus Samad Khan was taken prisoner. At the end of 1760, Alha Singh possessed 726 villages including many towns.

Relations with Delhi

Ali Muhammad Khan Rohilla was the Mughal governor of Sarhind from 1745 to 1748. He could not tolerate a strong man like Alha Singh in his province. He imprisoned him shortly after his taking charge of the government. Alha Singh remained in confinement upto February, 1748. On the approach of Ahmad Shah Durrani, his clansman, Ali Muhammad, fled away to Rohilkhand. Alha Singh was released by one of his devoted followers.

[1]*Vide Jiwan Britant Maharaj Alha Singh*, p. 103.

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The Mughal army faced the Durrani near Manupur, 15 kms north-west of Sarhind. Alha Singh cut off Durrani's supplies, and captured his camels and horses. The Durrani was defeated in the battle on 11 March, 1748. Alha Singh received a *khilat*, horses and cash in recognition of his service.

In September, 1758, Emperor Alamgir II, and his prime minister Imad-ul-Mulk went to collect revenues from Hansi, Bhuna, Sirsa and Rania. Alha Singh joined the imperial camp, and provided supplies of foodstuff and fodder.

Relations with Marathas, 1760

The Marathas and Afghans lay encamped at Panipat for about two months and a half before the third battle of Panipat. Ahmad Shah Durrani besieged the Maratha camp, and completely cut off their supplies. In this exigency Alha Singh sent short supplies of foodstuff to the Marathas through unfrequented and circuitous routes. When it came to the notice of the Durrani, he plundered Alha Singh's country, and the Sikh chief undertook not to send any supplies again. After the battle hundreds of Marathas who managed to escape from the battlefield took shelter in many villages in Sikh territories, chiefly in southern and south-eastern Panjab and Haryana.[1]

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Relations with Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Durrani and Rohillas

Muhammad Rahim Bakksh in *Daulat-e-Durrania*, says that Jamal Khan of Malerkotla, Rae Kalha of Jagraon, and Alha Singh joined Nadir Shah on his way to Karnal. Alha Singh helped the Mughals against Ahmad Shah Durrani during his first invasion in 1747-48. During his fourth invasion in 1756-57, immense booty, acquired from Delhi was sent to Lahore in advance under the charge of his son, Timur. A large part of it was plundered by Alha Singh near Sanaur. Before returning to Afghanistan, the Durrani annexed the Sarhind province to his kingdom. In his fifth invasion the Marathas

[1]The following places contain Maratha families descending from the refugees of 1761 :

Birchpur 40 families, Dola 15 families, Hat 9 families, Julana Mandi 10 families, Kaithal 80 families, Karsola (Jind State) 50 families, Manduthi near Asoda 20 families, Moi 6 families, Narwana 90 families, Phurlak 2 families, Rathal near Rohtak 15 families, Sargthal 2 families, Sikandarpur Majra 500 Maratha Brahmans, Thana on Rohtak-Kotli Road 150 families. (Vide Author's *Marathas and Panipat*, p. 288.)

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were besieged at Panipat. Alha Singh sold some quantity of grain to the Marathas. The Durrani sacked Alha Singh's capital Barnala in December, 1760. On his way back Ahmad Shah Durrani halted at Sarhind. Alha Singh waited upon him with suitable presents on 29 March, 1761, and promised to pay him annual tribute.

In the Ghallughara in February, 1762, Alha Singh had joined neither the Dal Khalsa nor the Durrani. The Shah was deeply annoyed. He laid waste Barnala. Alha Singh presented himself in the Durrani camp. The Durrani ordered to shave his head and beard. Alha Singh offered to purchase his hair for a sum of one lakh and a quarter rupees. The Shah accepted the money and spared his hair. He was taken to Lahore. There he secured his liberty by paying five lakhs of rupees.

Ahmad Shah Durrani's deputy in India was Najib-ud-daulah Rohilla. He was chiefly responsible for the destruction of Maratha army at Panipat. Najib said : "I am the bridegroom of this battlefield. Everything rests on my head; the others are mere guests accompanying the marriage procession. What is done here will be done by me and to me." In December, 1763, he killed the greatest Jat Raja Suraj Mal. His son Jawahir Singh hired a large body of the Dal Khalsa to revenge himself upon Najib. Alha Singh despatched a strong force of 1,000 under Bhola Singh to help Najib-ud-daulah.

In March, 1765, Ahmad Shah Durrani was at Sarhind on his way back to Afghanistan. Alha Singh waited upon him with costly presents and four lakhs of rupees in cash. He begged for the governorship of Sarhind province for an annual tribute of three lakhs and a half rupees. For the first instalment in advance he immediately paid two lakhs and eighty thousand rupees. The balance of Rs. 70,000[1] was paid with a post-dated *hundi* on the Hindu bankers of Kandhar. The Durrani conferred the title of Raja on Alha Singh, and appointed him his governor of the Sarhind province. Alha Singh accompanied the Shah up to Lahore.

Relations with the Dal Khalsa

Alha Singh maintained as far as possible good relations with the Dal Khalsa. His policy was to gain money and territory by remaining

[1]Alha Singh's grand-daughter, Rajinder Kanwar, was married at Phagwara. She offered to pay the balance of Rs. 70,000. Alha Singh did not accept it as it was against the Indian custom to take anything from a daughter's family.

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loyal first to Delhi and later to Kandhar, having all the time the Dal Khalsa on his side. This was a very delicate task as the Dal was waging a war of independence against both the Mughals and the Durrani. At the cost of all the three powers, the Mughals, the Durrani and the Dal Khalsa, he went on adding to his power step by step. He kept two different seals. The one, meant for the Muslims, bore the inscription of "Sultan Sahae Alha". The other, reserved for the Sikhs, had "Akal Sahae Alha Singh."[1]

Third baptism by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia

In 1761 he had submitted to Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Dal Khalsa was greatly annoyed. It marched towards Barnala to punish Alha Singh. He sent his vakils to wait upon Jassa Singh Ahluwalia the leader of the Dal Khalsa, to apologise, and to impose a fine on him. Jassa Singh took a lenient view of the affair, as he himself believed in following the Patiala policy. Hari Singh Bhangi, the leader of the Taruna Dal, wanted to punish him. Alha Singh appeared before the whole Dal Khalsa, explained his position, offered apologies, accepted a fine and entertained the Dal Khalsa. He expressed his deep gratitude to Jassa Singh, and requested him to become his patron by administering pahul to him. Hence he was baptised for the third time and Alha Singh agreed to offer an annual tribute to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. This statement is based on Khushwaqt Rae, who wrote his history of the Sikhs exactly fifty years later, and who was holding the post of the Diwan of the Sikh Sardars of Atari.[2] Ramjas Diwa[3] confirms it. Alha Singh's baptism by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia is accepted by the latest writer, Bhagat Singh.[4]

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Fourth baptism by Khushhal Singh Singhpuria

In 1762, in the Ghallughara Alha Singh had given no help to the Dal Khalsa, though the battle was fought in the neighbourhood of his capital. Further, he voluntarily submitted to the Durrani, and paid him one and a quarter lakhs of rupees to save his hair and five lakhs more to secure his liberty. Objection was taken to this course also. After the Ghallughara the Dal Khalsa had dispersed in various places.

[1]Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 680.
[2]Khushwaqt Rae, Punjab State Archives, Persian Ms., no. 800, folios 66a, 114a.
[3]*Tarikh Khandan Ahluwalian, Walie Kapurthala*, 47.
[4]Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity*, 1978, 102.

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One large group under Khushhal Singh Faizullahpuria, son and successor of Nawab Kapur Singh, was in Malwa. They advanced upon Patiala. Alha Singh resorted to his old device. According to the author of *Waqa-e-Khandan Rajagan Patiala*, folio 31b, Alha Singh took pahul for the fourth time from Khushhal Singh.

While returning homeward in March, 1765, Ahmad Shah Durrani stayed at Sarhind. Alha Singh waited upon him with rich presents. Qazi Nur Muhammad, who was accompanying the Durrani monarch, gives an interesting account of Alha Singh. He writes: Alha Jat, a zamindar in the province of Sarhind, was a ruler. He was a sacred thread wearer, and idol-worshipper, "yet he was very obedient to the king." Alha Jat saw the king with gifts which were accepted. "In the territories of the Panjab, Lahore and Sarhind there is none who has so much influence with the Shah as he. He is more obedient to the king than other Indians". "He always fought with the Sikhs." "He serves the king with a will both in his presence as well as in his absence and spares no pains in carrying out his orders."[1] He obtained the title of Raja and the governorship of Sarhind province from Ahmad Shah Durrani.

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The Dal Khalsa was enraged at Alha Singh's submission to the enemy of their faith. It marched upon his capital. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a patron of Alha Singh. He said that Alha Singh was a Sikh of the Gurus, and no action should be taken against him. He publicly ate with him from the same dish. The Taruna Dal was opposed to the policy of reconciliation. Its leader Hari Singh Bhangi attacked Alha Singh's troops. The Budha Dal did not join. In the engagement Hari Singh Bhangi was killed. The next leader of the Taruna Dal was Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. He was on friendly terms with Alha Singh. Thus the entire Dal Khalsa turned in favour of Patiala. Alha Singh got his grandson Amar Singh baptised by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.[2] Shortly afterwards Alha Singh passed away on 22 August, 1765, at the age of seventy-four.[3]

[1] *Jang Namah*, Persian Ms., 131-33.

[2] Karam Singh, *Jiwan Britant Maharaj Alha Singh*, 212-13.

[3] Karam Singh in his *Jiwan Britant Maharaj Alha Singh*, 249, states that Alha Singh died on 27 Sawan Samvat 1822 at the age of 74. The author of *Waqa-e-Khandan Rajagan Patiala*, Urdu Ms., no. 859, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, folio 33b, puts Alha Singh's death on Bhadon Badi 6, Samvat 1823, at the age of 70. Atar Singh Bhadauriya, p. 126, says that Alha Singh died in Bhadon, 1775, at Patiala at the age of 84.

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Alha Singh's character and achievements

Alha Singh was tall and well built. He was an embodiment of plain living and high thinking. Ordinarily he wore a turban and a pair of knicker bockers (*kachhera*), and covered his body with a cotton sheet in summer and with a blanket in winter. His food was simple devoid of many dishes and delicacies. He called himself a *chaudhri*, not a *sardar*, and never a *raja*, though he had obtained this title. He had only one wife, Fatto, unlike many others of his age, and strictly abstained from sexual delinquency.

It speaks volumes in his favour that from a small zamindar he rose to the position of the most powerful ruler in the Cis-Satluj region. At a time when confusion and chaos was prevailing everywhere, he maintained peace and order in his country. That is why the people never revolted against him in spite of the instigation of his rivals. His gallantry and prudence had made him the most powerful chief south of the Satluj.

In diplomacy he was par excellence. He always remained obedient to the Mughal Emperors, though occasionally he seized imperial villages. Such actions were well-managed by winning over local officials. He plundered Ahmad Shah Durrani's foraging parties in 1748. He robbed his son, Timur Shah, in 1757. In 1760 he offended the Durrani by supplying grain to Marathas. In 1764 he joined the Dal Khalsa in conquering Sarhind and in killing his governor Zain Khan. Yet he obtained the title of Raja and governorship of Sarhind from the Durrani.

He was an adept in the art of pleasing. He won over the Dal Khalsa time and again by taking pahul four times from its leaders, Kapur Singh, Dip Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Khushhal Singh Singhpuria. He made full and complete submission to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Yet he seized his eight villages, and did not return them in spite of strong protests and threats of force from the Ahluwalia chief. He pleased the Muslims and the Sikhs by using two different seals. Alha Singh may rightly be called Bismarck of the Sikhs. He had three balls in his hands, and by throwing them simultaneously into the air, he always caught them, never allowing any one to fall. Another remarkable achievement of Alha Singh was to keep the rival and jealous members of the Phulkian house united and attached to him.

He had great respect for womanhood. In 1727 he founded the village of Longowal near Sunam. One day he went up the roof of

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his house. His eyes fell on a young girl while bathing in a neighbouring house. He called her father and told him that he had adopted the girl as his daughter and would bear all the expenses of her marriage. Alha Singh was then only 36 years old. His *langar* or free mess was open to all without any consideration of caste, creed or religion. He firmly believed that Deg must precede Teg He was devoted to holy men like Baba Charan Das, Bhai Dayal Das and Bhai Mul Chand of Sunam.

Alha Singh had three sons and one daughter by Fatto, Bhumia Singh, Sardul Singh, Lal Singh and Bibi Pradhan. The girl was married to Chaudhri Sham Singh of village Ramdas Kodha. Bhumia Singh died in 1731, leaving behind one daughter, Rajindar Kanwar. She was married to Chaudhri Trilok Chand of Phagwara who owned 240 villages, and who was the most powerful chief in the Jalandhar Doab. The widow of Bhumia Singh was taken as wife by Sardul Singh under the custom of *karewa*[1] or *chadar dalna*. He had a son by his first wife, Amar Singh,[2] and another son Himmat Singh, by his second wife. Sardul Singh died in 1763.

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Maharaja Amar Singh, 1765-1781

Alha Singh was succeeded by his grandson Amar Singh son of Sardul Singh. Sardul Singh had another son Himmat Singh who was six months older than Amar Singh. Himmat Singh was born to his brother's widow married by Sardul Singh. So Himmat Singh was superseded by Amar Singh. Himmat Singh claimed the throne for himself and revolted. Amar Singh was supported by the rulers of Nabha, Jind, Kaithal and Malerkotla. Fighting continued for three months. Then Rani Fatto intervened. Bhawanigarh fort with Dhodha parganah was given to Himmat Singh in jagir.

[1]The custom of *karewa* or *chādar dālna* implied taking brother's widow as wife by offering her at a brief ceremony a covering sheet to wrap herself up. Such marriages were universal among the Sikhs in order to keep the family property intact. The children of these marriages were considered inferior in position and status to those of regular marriages, *shādi* or *vyāh*, contracted with a virgin and with all the customary ceremonies. The Sikh widows generally preferred younger brother of the deceased husband to the elder brother. The reason was that the elder brother was held in high esteem almost like a father-in-law and *purdah* was observed from him. The younger brother held a junior position and the woman behaved with him as an equal, having full freedom for gossip and jokes.

[2]Muhammad Hasan in his *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 143, says that Rajindar and Amar Singh were fed on the milk of the same woman. Therefore the girl was his *Shir ki bahan*.

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Amar Singh was born in 1747[1] at Barnala. He was 18 years old at the time of his accession. He was baptised by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and so he was his patron and supporter. He also presided over Amar Singh's coronation. According to Khushwaqt Rae Jassa Singh Ahluwalia "realized the fixed annual tribute from Amar Singh after the death of Raja Alha Singh".

In October, 1765, the Dal Khalsa attacked Najib-ud-daulah's lands in the Ganga Doab and in the Delhi region. Najib sought Amar Singh's help. He at once left Patiala. He united his forces with those of the Raja of Bhatner, and drove away the Sikhs from the district of Narnaul. He then joined Najib in the pursuit of the Sikhs along the Jamuna river.

Towards the close of 1765, Amar Singh seized about 70 villages of Malerkotla including Sherpur, Payal, Banur, Mansurpur and Isru. In Isru parganah Malerkotla forces put up a brave fight. Amar Singh sought help from Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Then Isru was occupied. Amar Singh assigned one-fourth of revenues of Isru to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Baghel Singh Karorasinghia suggested to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to join him in conquering Patiala State, and to divide it between themselves. Jassa Singh rejected the proposal and informed Amar Singh about it. Out of gratitude Amar Singh assigned the revenues of the whole parganah of Isru to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. In order to keep the newly acquired territory Amar Singh built the fort of Amargarh, 25 kms from Malerkotla.[2]

In 1766, the Dal Khalsa plundered Najib-ud-daulah's country north of Delhi. Najib gave them a hot pursuit, but he was very much hard-pressed by them. In these engagements Amar Singh gave considerable assistance to Najib-ud-daulah against the Sikhs. The Sikhs plundered Patiala territory, fought with Amar Singh and caused him great annoyance.[3]

Received the title of Raja-e-Rajagan, 1767

Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the eighth time in the winter of 1766. He crossed river Beas on 17 January, 1767, and

[1]Atar Singh Bhadauriya gives Kartik Samvat 1803 Bikrami (November, 1746) as the date of Amar Singh's birth.

[2]Muhammad Hasan in *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 74-75, assigns the occupation of Isru to Alha Singh.

[3]*SPD*, xxix, 133, 143.

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encamped in the Jalandhar Doab. Indian rulers and princes sent their agents who joined the Shah there. The vakil of Amar Singh and Himmat Singh presented the Durrani on behalf of his masters with Rs. 5,000 and two horses as a nazar. To Shah Vali Khan and Jahan Khan he presented Rs. 2,000 each. While returning to Afghanistan, the Shah halted for the night on 18 March, 1767, at Ambala. He called upon Amar Singh to pay 9 lakhs, which sum had become due as arrears of tribute. Amar Singh joined the Shah and provided him with ample supplies. He followed the Shah's camp up to Sarhind. Najib-ud-daulah was also present in the Durrani camp. He requested the Shah to grant him Sarhind province and give Amar Singh his fort of Pathargarh and the neighbouring territory. On hearing this Amar Singh requested for an interview with the Shah. He was informed that he could see him after having shaved his head.

All this perturbed Rani Fatto. Amar Singh thought that he would be taken to Najibabad as a prisoner. Rani Fatto with rich presents visited Shah Vali Khan, the Durrani prime minister in private, and begged him to save Amar Singh from Najib's machinations. The Wazir pleaded with the Shah in favour of Amar Singh. Amar Singh offered to purchase his hair for one lakh of rupees. He agreed to pay three lakhs of rupees as the arrears of tribute and for confirming him as the ruler of Patiala and Sarhind. He won over Jahan Khan, the Afghan commander-in-chief, by offering to purchase the Indian boys and girls, whom the Afghan soldiers were carrying with them. He paid a certain sum for every boy and girl. Jahan Khan and his soldiers were glad to get money for their prisoners. The Shah was pleased. He conferred upon him elephants, horses, a *khilat*, a standard (*naubat*), and the superlative title of Raja-e-Rajagan, in order to establish his supremacy over other Phulkian chiefs and sardars in the Cis-Satluj region. The public called him *Bandi Chhor* or liberator of slaves. Out of gratitude for the prime minister he called himself Amar Singh Bamzai, the clan of Shah Vali Khan. His seal bore the inscription of Amar Singh Bamzai. He issued coins in the name of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

Amar Singh's coins

After the retirement of Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1767 Amar Singh struck his own coins in silver and gold. No copper coins were issued. Their purpose was served by rough and crude *mansuri paise* valued generally at 80 to 100 for a rupee. *Damris* and *kauris* were often in

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use. Four *damris* made one *paisa* and five *kauris* were equal to one *damri*. A rupee consisted of sixteen annas or 64 *paise*.

Amar Singh's silver coin was known as Raja Shahi rupee It was three-fourths of an inch or nearly two centimetres in circumference. It contained 11.25 *mashas* out of 12 of pure silver. It was four *rattis* less in weight than the rupee of East India Company, though the quantity of silver in both the coins was the same. The value of both the rupees was equal to 100 *paise* of today. While the value of British rupee was fixed, the Patiala rupee fluctuated according to the market price of silver. It fetched some times a little more and some times a little less. The Patiala gold coin or Raja Shahi *ashrafi* weighed 10.75 *mashas*, and its price was generally Rs. 15. Eight *rattis* made a *masha* and twelve *mashas* a *tola*. Both the coins bore the following inscription :

Sikka zad az qadir-e-bechun ba Ahmad Badshah,
Sikka zan bar sim-o-zar az mauj-e-māhi tā bamāh.

(The peerless God ordered King Ahmad to strike coins on silver and gold (to make them current) from sea to moon.) As this inscription was long and the coin was small, a part of the inscription was inscribed. The obverse of the coin had the year and place of minting : *San Jalus maimanat māṇūs zarab Sarhind.* Amar Singh's coins were marked by a *Kalgi* or small aigrette plume. No alteration in the inscription was ever made by Amar Singh and his son and successor Sahib Singh. Only some changes were made in the marks to distinguish each ruler. Sahib Singh's coins had a two-edged sword (*saif*).

Manimajra, Panjor and Sialba

Manimajra close to Chandigarh was a parganah of the Sarhind province. In the time of Zain Khan, governor of Sarhind, Ganga Ram was the revenue officer of this parganah. It contained a *Chaurasi* or a group of 84 villages. After the conquest of Sarhind by the Sikhs in January, 1764, Ganga Ram's son, Gharib Das, occupied the whole parganah. Gharib Das further extended his territory containing 45 villages of Manimajra, 126 villages of Mullanpur, 6 of Chandigarh and 7 of Panjor, total 184 villages. The fort and gardens of Panjor were celebrated for their strength and beauty in eastern Panjab.

Raja Kirat Prakash of Nahan was then extending his rule all over the hilly country lying in the lower ranges between the Jamuna

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and Satluj rivers. He was keen to possess Panjor gardens. Friendly relations existed between Nahan and Patiala. The Raja held a meeting with Amar Singh at Banur and exchanged turbans with him as a bond of brotherhood. He sought Amar Singh's help in capturing Panjor. Amar Singh placed 1,000 men under his able general Bakhshi Lakhna Dogar, at the disposal of Nahan Raja. This Raja was joined by the neighbouring Rajput Rajas of Hindur (Nalagarh) and Kahlur (Bilaspur). The allies laid siege to Panjor in 1768.

The fort of Panjor was then held by Ganga Ram. Gharib Das was away perhaps on a pilgrimage. Ganga Ram held himself bravely for one month and a half. The fort fell when Ganga Ram was killed by a gunshot. The Patiala general lost 300 men in this campaign. The Rajas also suffered equally. Just at this moment Gharib Das arrived, but he could not recapture Panjor.

Gharib Das allied himself with Hari Singh of Sialba and Rupar. Both of them attacked the forces of the Raja of Nahan holding Panjor and its neighbouring territory. Gharib Das succeeded in occupying Chandangarh now called Chandi Mandar. They also created disturbances in the Banur parganah of Patiala State.

In 1778 Amar Singh decided to punish Gharib Das and Hari Singh. Gharib Das shut himself up in the fort of Manimajra. He offered a stout resistance for three months. He then paid a large sum of money to make peace. Amar Singh then marched against Sialba, 30 kms to the north-west of Manimajra. Gharib Das died in 1783. He had two sons, Gopal Das and Prakash Chand. Gopal Das helped the British in 1809 and in the Gorkha war. He was offered Panjor, but he preferred the title of Raja which was granted. He died in 1816.

Hari Singh was fully prepared to meet the situation. No sooner did Amar Singh besiege Sialba than he was surrounded by the forces of Hari Singh's allies, Karam Singh Shahid of Shahzadpur, Gurbakhsh Singh of Ambala, Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad Markanda, Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, Diwan Singh of Sikandra and Rae Singh and Bhag Singh of Buriya. The Patiala troops were completely routed. Several hundred men were killed. Bakhshi Lakhna Dogar lost his life. Diwan Nanun Mal was wounded. Two generals, Chandu Singh and Mahan Singh were taken prisoners. Amar Singh managed to escape.

Amar Singh could not bear the disgrace, insult and humiliation having been badly beaten by a small sardar. He invited help from

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his kinsmen. The first to respond immediately was Rani Rajindar of Phagwara. She had her own grudge against Hari Singh. He had eloped with a lady of her family, Rajan. Rajindar was a great commander. With a force of 3,000 men she marched to Patiala ravaging the country of Hari Singh and his supporters falling on her way. The Bhais of Kaithal, Rajas of Nabha, Jind and Nahan, Nawab of Malerkotla, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Budh Singh Faizullahpuria, Saundha Singh of Khanna, Jai Singh of Lidhran and others joined Amar Singh.

All these advanced to Sialba. In those days the average payment to a foot soldier was Rs. 5 a month, to a horseman Rs. 30 monthly, and to the general Rs. 5 daily. Amar Singh offered to every deserter from Hari Singh's camp Rs. 1,5,25 a day respectively for joining him. It produced an instantaneous effect. Daily desertions became frequent. Hari Singh offered a large tribute. Amar Singh accepted it and retired without annexing any territory.

Baghel Singh won over, 1768

In 1767-68, Amar Singh seized various villages of other sardars. Baghel Singh Karorasinghia lost some parganahs, including Jamaitgarh, Bahlolpur and Mullanpur, etc. Baghel Singh prevailed upon other sardars who had also suffered at the hands of Amar Singh to join him. Amar Singh was supported by many others including the Raja of Nahan. A drawn battle was fought at Ghuram, 25 kms south of Patiala, in 1768. Baghel Singh took to plundering Patiala territory. The Raja sued for peace. He got his son Sahib Singh baptised by Baghel Singh.

The battle of Miran, 1768

In 1768 Nazir Khan Rohilla came from Delhi to realize tribute from Patiala. Amar Singh invited help from Majha Sikhs. A battle was fought at Miran near Barnala in which the Khan was slain.

Bhatinda, 1771

In 1771 Gainda Rae of village Bhikiwala complained to Amar Singh that a woman of his family named Gori, known for her beauty and grace, had been carried away by Sukhchain Singh of Bhatinda who possessed 125 villages. Amar Singh despatched a force of 10,000 men under Bhali Singh. He began plundering the Bhatinda territory. Shortly afterwards the Maharaja himself took command of

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the campaign. The Bhatinda chief, in order to remove the cause of conflict, killed the woman. Amar Singh continued fighting and overpowered Sukhchain Singh. He was left with 24 villages, and the rest were annexed to Patiala territory.

Kot Kapura

Kot Kapura family belonged to the same stock as the Phulkians. Kapura built a fort which bore his name. He died in 1708. Jodh Singh and Hamir Singh were his grandsons. Hamir Singh was the founder of Faridkot. From Bhatinda Amar Singh tried to conquer Kot Kapura, but failed. Many horses of Amar Singh were captured by Jodh Singh, chief of Kot Kapura. In order to tease the Raja, he named one horse Alha and a mare Fatto, and rode on both of them turn by turn.[1] Amar Singh could not bear the insult. He led a strong force against him. Jodh Singh and his son Jit Singh accompanied by 150 horsemen came out to reconnoitre Amar Singh's position. Amar Singh's spies reported this fact to him. They were immediately attacked from an ambush and killed. Amar Singh retired without annexing Kot Kapura.

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Janko Rao

In October, 1772, a Maratha chief, Janko Rao, advanced as far as Pehowa. Amar Singh was so much frightened that he removed his treasures and family from Patiala to Bhatinda for safety. The Maratha commander did not come to Patiala, and returned.

Battles with Bhattis, 1774

In the beginning of 1774 Amar Singh with his Diwan Nanun Mal laid siege to a strong Bhatti fort at Begran in the district of Hisar. In an area of about 25 kms long and wide, several engagements were fought for three months. One day 30,000 Muslims vowed for a holy war attacked the Patiala camp. About 3,000 men lost their lives, mostly the Sikhs. Amar Singh's troops took to flight. The Bhattis pursued them for 25 kms. Amar Singh's entire baggage fell into the hands of Bhattis and Pachādās.

Prince Himmat Singh was determined to retrieve Patiala honour. He spent one month in reorganising the Patiala forces and suddenly

[1]Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* (Gurmukhi), III, 685; Griffin, *Rajas*, reprint, 1970, p. 33 fn. 34.

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attacked Bhattis. The first engagement took place at Fatahabad, second at Bohya, third at Rori, fourth near Rania, fifth at Munak, and the last near Tohana. Thousands of men were killed on both sides. Prince Himmat Singh also lost his life in the final engagement.

Rahimdad Khan

Just then news arrived that Rahimdad Khan Rohilla, governor of Hansi, under orders from Delhi, had attacked Jind and Raja Gajpat Singh had been besieged. Amar Singh despatched a contingent to Jind under Diwan Nanun Mal. Rahimdad Khan was defeated and slain in May, 1776. Nanun Mal occupied many places in the districts of Rohtak and Hisar. He repaired the old fort on the hill of Tosham, and built another fort on the ruined mound of Agroha. Najaf Khan, the prime minister of Delhi, sent a force against the victors of Jind. Amar Singh was not willing to fight Delhi. He surrendered his newly-occupied territories in Rohtak and Hisar districts. In October-November, 1776, the combined forces of Amar Singh and Gajpat Singh of Jind marched to Gohana, 70 kms northwest of Delhi, and plundered the neighbouring country.

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Marriage of Princess Chand Kaur

In November, 1777, Amar Singh married Chand Kaur, daughter of Himmat Singh, to Dasaundha Singh, son of Tara Singh Ghaiba of the Dallewalia misl. The marriage party consisting of twelve thousand men stayed at Patiala for ten days. It cost the state five lakhs of rupees.[1]

Campaign against Bhattis, 1778

In the winter of 1778 Amar Singh opened his campaign against Bhattis. Begran, Fatahabad, Sirsa and Bhatner situated a little distant from the westen border of Sirsa district on the banks of river Ghaggar, were subdued one after the other. Amar Singh then besieged Rania, 14 kms west of Sirsa. It was a strong fort in possession of Muhammad Amin Khan Bhatti. The siege continued for four months. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, an exile from the Panjab helped Amar Singh in the subjugation of Bhatti chiefs. By March, 1779, most of the Bhatti chiefs had accepted Amar Singh's suzerainty.

[1]Muhammad Hasan, pp. 103-7 is wrong in stating that this marriage took place in February, 1778.

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Abdul Ahad's expedition to Patiala, 1779

A continuous warfare was going on between Amar Singh and the Cis-Satluj chiefs. In the beginning of 1779 he appealed to Delhi for help against the Sikhs. A number of Sikh leaders were in Delhi. They incited the deputy prime minister, Abdul Ahad Khan, to conquer not only the Cis-Satluj territory, but also to recover the provinces of Lahore and Multan for the empire. These Sikh sardars offered to help him, and tempted him with rich treasures at Patiala. Amar Singh had invited the Nawab to crush the power of other Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs whose territory he wanted to seize. Now these very people against whom he was expected to proceed became the minister's confidants and sole advisers.

Abdul Ahad taking the second son of Emperor Shah Alam II, Mirza Jahan Shah Farkhundah Bakht, left Delhi on 18 June, 1779. They encamped at Thanesar in September where all the Sikh chiefs except Amar Singh joined the imperial camp. The newspapers reported that the Nawab sent Raja Shambu Nath and Raja Daya Ram to Patiala. They returned to the imperial camp on 12 September, 1779, with Diwan Nanun Mal. On 13 September Nanun Mal and Maha Singh, brother-in-law of Raja Amar Singh, were granted an audience by the Prince. Each presented to the Prince eleven gold coins and a horse, and to the Nawab seven gold coins and a horse. Nanun Mal was granted a *khilat* of five pieces, a *jigha* or an ornament of gold studded with diamonds for the turban, a *sarpech*, and a palanquin. Maha Singh received all these articles with an elephant instead of a palanquin. In the afternoon Nanun Mal and Maha Singh were called by Abdul Ahad Khan to settle the amount of tribute. Diwan Nanun Mal offered bankers' bills to the value of five lakhs and an extra sum of Rs. 25,000 as a *nazar* for the Prince on the condition of his immediate retreat. Abdul Ahad insisted on Amar Singh's attendance in the imperial camp.

On 15 September Abdul Ahad got the news that Tara Singh Ghaiba with four other chiefs was on his way to Patiala. On 17 September, Nanun Mal told Abdul Ahad Khan that Raja Amar Singh would not come into the camp, and the Nawab should accept the tribute and retire. Then a messenger reported that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Khushhal Singh Singhpuria and Tara Singh Ghaiba at the head of 15,000 horse had arrived on the banks of river Satluj. The Nawab moved his camp towards Patiala. On 20 September Nanun Mal raised

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the sum of the tribute to seven lakhs saying : "Raja Amar Singh is loyal to you in every way; but he is not coming to an audience as his enemies are with you. Please take seven lakhs of rupees and retire". The Nawab went on moving his camp slowly to Patiala. On 23 September Nanun Mal made one more effort to persuade the Nawab to return. He placed before him bankers' bills for five lakhs. The Nawab demanded thirty lakhs and tore up the bills of five lakhs.

On 23 September a Mughal force laid siege to the fort of Saifabad, 6 kms south of Patiala. The powder-magazine in the fort caught fire, and 300 men inside the fort were burnt to death and wounded. Amar Singh held out hopes to interview the Prince, and continued making promises and offering pretexts. On 7 October a Mughal contingent appeared before Patiala. A battle was fought on that day by Amar Singh and Tara Singh Ghaiba. The Sikh forces suffered a defeat. Amar Singh and Tara Singh shut themselves up in the fort. Severe fighting took place on 8 and 9 October, 1779. Abdul Ahad's failure to take the fort at once turned the tables against him. His own followers became restless. They thought that the minister was playing a losing game. They demanded arrears of pay. A mutiny broke out between the Mughal and Afghan soldiers in the imperial army. Many Sikh sardars who were in the imperial camp suddenly deserted him. The news came that the Majha Sikhs were about to arrive. The Nawab hastily retired without gaining anything, on 14 October. On his way back he was frequently attacked by some Sikhs and his baggage and armaments were plundered. He was protected by those Sikhs who were with him, and by his artillery. He reached Panipat on 18 October and heaved a sigh of relief.

About the end of January, 1780, Amar Singh sent a vakil to the prime minister Najaf Khan at Delhi. He on behalf of his master offered submission. When he wanted to take leave on 9 February, he was informed that a *khilat* was being prepared for the Raja and that he must wait till it was ready. On 20 February, Zabita Khan presented the vakils of Raja Amar Singh to Najaf Khan at a private audience in the Wazir's palace. The Wazir examined two *khilats* prepared for Amar Singh and Gajpat Singh, two for the vakils and two more for the daughters of Amar Singh and Hamir Singh of Nabha who were to be married shortly. On 23 February letters for Amar Singh and Gajpat Singh were given to Zabita Khan for speedy despatch. On 28 February Najaf Khan handed over the *khilats* for Amar Singh and Gajpat Singh to Sahib Singh, agent of Zabita Khan, including several

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doshalas for their relatives and courtiers for immediate disposal.

Cis-Satluj Sikhs invade Patiala, 1780

The Persian news-letters tell us that on 8 February, 1780, Raja Amar Singh left Patiala to attend the marriage of the daughter of Hamir Singh of Nabha. His luggage was following him at some distance. Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad Markanda lay encamped at Bazidpur, 15 kms from Patiala, with seven or eight thousand horse. He plundered Amar Singh's baggage on 15 February. Raja Shambu Nath laid waste the town of Muhammadpur. The Raja retired to Kot. On 17 February Desu Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia advanced towards Patiala. Raja Amar Singh came out of the fort to oppose them. In the fierce fight that ensued many soldiers were killed and wounded. At last Amar Singh entered the fort and the Sikhs plundered the environs of Patiala. The Sikhs besieged him. The siege continued till the end of the month. On hearing the news of the approach of Jai Singh Kanhiya at the head of 20,000 men to celebrate the marriage of Jaimal Singh Kanhiya with Sahib Kanwar they retired towards Sarhind on 29 February, 1780.

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Sahib Kaur's marriage, 1780

The Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla state that on 3 March, 1780, Jai Singh Kanhiya reached Patiala to celebrate the marriage of Jaimal Singh son of Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya of Fatahgarh in Gurdaspur district, with Bibi Sahib Kaur, daughter of Raja Amar Singh. The marriage party consisted of twenty thousand men who stayed for ten days. It cost the state ten lakhs of rupees. The khilat sent by Najaf Khan prime minister of the Mughal Empire, for Sahib Kanwar, was worn by the seven-year-old bride. After the marriage, Jai Singh and Amar Singh despatched a force of 10,000 against the invaders who were driven away.

Help offered to the imperial general, March, 1781

The imperial general Shafi invaded Cis-Satluj territory in February, 1781. He was constantly harassed by the Sikhs so hard that he sought help from Raja Amar Singh. On 17 March, 1781, Chain Singh, the Patiala representative, waited upon Shafi at village Nakri. He was granted a *doshala* and a *goshwara* which was a jewelled ornament for the turban. A *khilat* of five pieces was handed over to him for Raja Amar Singh. Amar Singh left Patiala a few days later

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at the head of a force to join Shafi. In order to force Amar Singh to return, the Sikh chiefs did not allow him to proceed beyond Ambala. Karam Singh of Shahabad checked him in front, and Tara Singh Ghaiba on his rear. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia began to plunder Patiala territory on 28 March. Jassa Singh was bribed and he fell back to Khanna. Amar Singh agreed to wait on the Ahluwalia sardar there.

Shortly afterwards Amar Singh passed away in 1781. There is no doubt that Amar Singh's quick intelligence, firm determination and strong arm had made Patiala the most powerful state between the Jamuna and the Satluj. He died at the young age of 34. If he had lived up to 1803, there might have been two Sikh kingdoms, the Lahore kingdom extending upto Satluj and the Patiala kingdom between rivers Satluj and Jamuna, and from Shivalik hills to the desert of Bikaner. The British Government would have been happy to have Patiala as a buffer state between Lahore and Delhi.

Maharaja Sahib Singh

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The hard toper, Amar Singh, had two children by his first wife only. The elder was a brilliant girl, Sahib Kanwar, and the younger was an imbecile son, Sahib Singh. On the death of his step-brother Himmat Singh, his widow, Deso, was taken as a wife under *karewa* system. She had a daughter by Himmat Singh, Chand Kanwar, who was married to Dasaundha Singh, son of Tara Singh Ghaiba.

Amar Singh was succeeded by his 6-year-old son Sahib Singh. During his minority as well as after attaining majority, the Patiala state was saved from complete disintegration by three ladies of the royal family and a Hindu prime minister. All these four personalities suffered greatly from the imbecility of Sahib Singh and died in despair and despondency.

Sahib Singh's grandmother Rani Hukman fully realized the delicate situation of the state, and entrusted the full administration to Diwan Nanun Mal. She was a wise lady and gave whole-hearted support to the Diwan. But as the Patiala state was in a complete mess, and there were intrigues all around against her and the minister, she gave up the ghost in a fit of dejection soon afterwards.

Nanun Mal

Raja Amar Singh had conferred upon Diwan Nanun Mal the title

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of Rāe Rāyān Rāe Manak Chand Bahadur. He was a resident of Patiala state and had risen in its service to the position of prime minister. All writers on Patiala history testify to his ability, honesty and integrity. Gian Singh states :

On the death of Maharaja Amar Singh and a little later of Rani Hukman, the state of Patiala received such terrible shocks as could wreck it. At this critical time the boat of the state in control of a child boatman was moving with the wind and waves in the sea. The crocodile relatives were waiting to strike at it and sink it. The only one man who saved the state from total destruction was Nanun Mal, and there was nobody else to save it. It was his achievement that he kept in check the enemies within the state and outside it. He not only preserved the state, but made it more prosperous. In sex matters he was inflexibly strict. Except his own wife all other women were to him mothers, sisters, daughters and daughters-in-law. He looked upon the wealth of others as poison for himself. He bestowed great care and attention on the poor and distressed, on widows, Brahmans and saints. He greatly looked after the subject people. His justice separated milk from water. He was thoroughly virtuous.[1]

Atar Singh Bhadauria says Wazir Nanun Mal was extremely clever. He kept territories like Payal, etc. under Patiala State by sword.[2]

Muhammad Hasan records : He was a great organiser, brave and bold. He preserved the state by his courage, sacrifice, perseverance and foresight. He was most able, well-wisher and useful for the state, gifted with wisdom, sagacity, courage and bravery. He served faithfully and devotedly.

Griffin writes: "Through the influence of Rani Hukman, the grandmother of the young chief, Diwan Nanun Mal was appointed prime minister and no better choice could have been made. The Diwan, an Aggarwal Bannia of Sunam, was a man of great experience and honesty. He had served Raja Amar Singh well, both in the council and in the field,.....He was a man of extraordinary resource and his powers appeared to rise with danger. He sent to Lucknow for trained gunners and officers who could discipline his troops after the European fashion.....There were numerous rebellions, some of them very strong, by various sardars related to

[1]Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* (Gurmukhi), III, 707-8.
[2]Atar Singh, *Twarikh Sidhu Braran Ate Khandan Phul*, 131.

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or connected with Patiala. The State could have disintegrated into small states, but it was saved by Nanun Mal. In one campaign an assassin made an attempt on the life of the Diwan, and he was seriously wounded."[1]

Nanun Mal had two great defects, which in the eyes of the Sikhs nullified all his virtues. He smoked in office and left a cloud of smoke which the Sikh sardars felt as if directed towards them. Secondly, he accepted the salute of the Sikh sardars not with his hand but by raising the fore-part of the long tube of his hubble-bubble (*Pechwan huqqa*). This attitude was repaid by them with the deepest hatred.

Sahib Singh's marriage, 1782

Sahib Singh had been betrothed by his father to the daughter of Ganda Singh Bhangi. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Rani Hukman suggested an early marriage. The marriage was fixed in 1782, one year after Amar Singh's death. Nanun Mal made grand preparations. The marriage party contained Bhag Singh of Jind, Hamir Singh of Nabha, Desu Singh of Kaithal, Nawab Ataullah of Malerkotla, and Rae Ahmad of Jagraon.

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Jassa Singh Ahluwalia joined the marriage party at Kapurthala. He bore the entire expense of the *barāt* from Kapurthala to Taran Taran. At the gurdwara of Taran Taran Jassa Singh Ahluwalia administered pahul to Sahib Singh and adorned him with a *khilat*, sword and shield. This was his second baptism. The first time he was baptised by Baghel Singh. Thus Jassa Singh baptised three generations of Patiala. The marriage ceremony was performed at village Panjwar. On its way back the *barāt* halted at Fatahabad. Nanun Mal presented Jassa Singh on behalf of Patiala State a number of horses. Jassa Singh gave Sahib Singh a necklace of pearls, a jewel for the head, *jigha*, a *khilat*, and a fully caparisoned elephant. All other princes and chiefs were given *khilats* and gifts at Patiala by Nanun Mal who spent five lakhs of rupees on this marriage.[2] Rani Hukmān passed away shortly afterwards.

Nanun Mal imprisoned, 1783-85

In 1783 one of the most terrible famines occurred in Northern India. The rains and harvests completely failed, People died of

[1]Griffin, *Rajas*, 55, 57, 58.

[2]Griffin, *Rajas*, p. 62, puts this marriage in 1787.

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starvation and disease. More than half the population of the country perished. Cattle and animals died by thousands. Bands of dacoits and robbers swarmed the country. The subordinate chiefs of Patiala state began to declare their independence. No revenues could be collected. Further, some members of the ruling family began to appropriate cash, gold and jewellery in the state treasury. Nanun Mal imposed restrictions upon them. They became hostile to the minister. He had nobody to support him in the royal family. Among his prominent enemies were Rani Khem Kaur, one of Raja Amar Singh's widows and Bibi Pradhan, daughter of Alha Singh. Hari Singh of Rupar captured many villages of Patiala. Nanun Mal led an expedition against him. Hari Singh fled away to Rupar. The Diwan pursued him. In an engagement Nanun Mal was seriously wounded. Finding his return passage blocked by Hari Singh, the Diwan went to Anandpur[1] for recovery. The ladies of the imperial household called him to Patiala and put him into prison in 1783, and got themselves busy in the spoliation of treasury. The neighbouring Sikh sardars pounced upon Patiala territory and seized as many villages as they could.

In 1785 a quarrel arose between Raja Sahib Singh and his Bakhshi over the question of roll-call of troops. The Bakhshi slapped Sahib Singh who was then ten years old. He went weeping to his mother. The Rani put the Bakhshi under arrest. The Bakhshi's relatives held four large forts which they handed over to Baghel Singh Karora-singhia of Chhalondi and Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya. The Raja invited Jai Singh Kanhiya, his sister's uncle-in-law. He was in mourning on account of the sudden death of Haqiqat Singh, father-in-law of Sahib Kanwar. The Bakhshi's relatives invited Khushhal Singh Singhpuria. He carried fire and sword in the Patiala territory, and seized some places such as Banur.

Rani Rajindar Kanwar reappointed Nanun Mal as prime minister, 1785

At this critical stage another lady sprang upon the scene. Rani Rajindar Kanwar, the first cousin of Raja Amar Singh, was married at Phagwara. She could not tolerate the ruin of her parental state. She collected a force, hurried to Patiala, set free Diwan Nanun Mal, and restored him to his old position of prime minister.

[1]The Sodhis of Anandpur and Kartarpur in Jalandhar district are descended from Guru Arjan, and those of Firozpur and Patiala districts from Guru Arjan's elder brother Prithi Chand.

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Dhar Rao secured lost Patiala territory, 1785

Finding every body else opposed to him Nanun Mal felt the necessity of training his troops on European lines. He had at that time a permanent force consisting of 4,500 cavalry and 1,500 infantry. With the help of the British Resident and the Nawab of Oudh, Nanun Mal secured the services of a few gunners and officers from Lucknow to train his army. This required time, but the State was to be saved immediately. He invited the Maratha chief Dhar Rao from Delhi for recovering the Patiala territory on a promise of three lakhs of rupees and Rs. 5,000 per day to meet the expenses of troops with responsibility to supply ammunition.

In October, 1785, Dhar Rao advanced northward. Diwan Nanun Mal, Rani Rajindar and Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind came to Thanesar to receive the Maratha chief. There Baghel Singh made his submission to Dhar Rao, and returned the Patiala territory. The combined forces first turned towards Kaithal, 50 kms distant. Its chief Bhai Lal Singh, connected with Patiala family, had captured many villages of Patiala in retaliation to Amar Singh's opposition to his release from Mughal captivity. Dhar Rao realized tribute from him and Nanun Mal recovered Patiala territorry. Nanun Mal then led the army to Ambala. The Patiala villages were taken from its chief Mohar Singh Nishanwala. Then they advanced to Chhat and Banur. After a little fighting Khushhal Singh Singhpuria parted with Patiala villages. Sahib Singh's rule was established over all the lost land. Nanun Mal gratefully offered to Dhar Rao a sum of five lakhs of rupees, and the Maratha sardar returned to Karnal in January, 1786. In this journey Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind was taken ill, and he died at Safidon on 18 January, 1786.

Amba Rao's expedition, 1787

Dhar Rao's expedition to Patiala taught the Marathas that Cis-Satluj region was a fertile field for extortion and plunder on account of complete disunity among the Sikhs. In May, 1787, another Maratha chief Ambaji Ingle made up his mind to try his fortune in this region. Kirkpatrick, the British Resident with Sindhia, was of the opinion that "the claim to tribute advanced by the Marathaas could not be disputed by these petty chiefs; both bacause having always been accustomed to pay it to Nujjif Khan, it was become established; and because they were unable to collect any force capable of contending with that headed by Ambajee."

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Ambaji arrived at Thanesar. Having performed certain religious rites he pushed on towards Patiala. He halted at Pehowa and then at Ghuram, 25 kms south of Patiala. Here he was joined by Diwan Nanun Mal to settle the amount of tribute, but he was not in a hurry and delayed the negotiations. On the other hand Mahadji Sindhia recalled Ambaji at once to join him in the campaign against Jaipur. Ambaji was supported by Ghulam Qadir Rohilla. Nanun Mal secretly offered the Rohilla chief a bribe of Rs. 20,000 on the condition of his immediate desertion from the Maratha camp. Ghulam Qadir took the money and left Ambaji on 4 June, 1787. Ambaji was not disheartened, but Sindhia's letters were most urgent and pressing. So he began his retreat on 7 June without getting anything from Patiala. The Sikh chiefs against their usual practice safely escorted him to Karnal where he reached on 14 June. He left Karnal on 16 June, reached Delhi on 22 June, and joined Sindhia on 16 July, 1787.

Rane Khan's march to Patiala, December, 1790

The Sikh chiefs of the neighbourhood were plundering Patiala territory. Revenues had ceased coming from countryside and the treasury was empty. In this exigency Nanun Mal invited the Maratha general Rane Khan from the Ganga Doab. He halted at Thanesar for twenty days. Bhanga Singh of Thanesar frequently attacked his camp and convoys, and everyday carried off some elephants, camels and horses. The Sikhs plundered his supplies. He left for Jhansa, 23 kms nearer to Patiala. On the way Bhanga Singh deprived him of three elephants, eight horses and some baggage. On his approach the Sikhs retired from Patiala territory. Now Nanun Mal could send back the Maratha general, but he had no money to pay him.

Nanun Mal went to Saifabad, and asked Gulab Kali, a mistress of late Raja Amar Singh, who was residing in the fort, for money. She got ready to fight. At the minister's suggestion the Marathas besieged the fort. Gulab Kali offered stout resistance, and when her ammunition stores were exhausted, she used silver bullets by melting rupees. Meanwhile the Maratha troops were laying waste the Patiala territory. Bibi Rajindar Kanwar could not tolerate this. At the head of a military guard she visited the Maratha camp. She induced Rane Khan to retire promising to pay the tribute after personally settling the amount with Mahadji Sindhia who was encamped at Mathura. He was paid Rs. 60,000 for the present. Rane Khan left taking Bibi Rajindar, Nanun Mal, his son Devi Ditta and Rae Ahmad of Jagraon.

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Rae Ahmad escaped at Panipat. Nanun Mal was allowed to go from Delhi to collect funds. Rani Rajindar and Nanun Mal's son, Devi Ditta, accompanied the Maratha army to Mahadji's camp at Mathura. Rajindar was treated most respectfully and was let off in July, 1791 on the receipt of one lakh of rupees sent by Nanun Mal. Devi Ditta was detained in the Maratha camp as a surety for payment of Rs. 6,40,000.

Nanun Mal's dismissal and death, 1791

In the absence of Rajindar, the palace intrigues made Sahib Singh take the control of the State in his own hands. He appointed his sister, Sahib Kanwar, prime minister. Nanun Mal was dismissed as well as all his sons and relatives. Their property was confiscated, and some of them were imprisoned. Nanun Mal tried to revolt with the help of Malerkotla, but failed. He died at Malerkotla on 21 November, 1791. Griffin writes: "But the Diwan was too honest to be successful. In a Native State, during a long minority, the general rule of practice is corruption of the grossest and most unblushing kind; and should chance place an honest man in power, he is at once assailed by the crowd of parasites and slaves who hate a character which is a perpetual menace and reproach to themselves; and he must be strong as well as honest, to defy his enemies who include in their ranks every man in the State except himself. Nanun Mal besides was of so proud a disposition that he did not care whom he offended. He had given many of the most lucrative offices of the state to his sons and relatives, and excited the greatest dislike by his custom of smoking his *hukka* in Durbar, when giving audience to Sikh chiefs, tobacco being odious to them and forbidden by their creed.

"The chief object of his ministers was to confine Sahib Singh's attention to pleasure, nautches, hunting and elephant fights, that he might be disposed to leave State affairs to their management. Against the Diwan they poisoned his mind.

"He alone saved Patiala from utter collapse after the death of Raja Amar Singh, when every neighbouring chief was ready to dismember it and when feudatories and subjects were in open revolt. That he oppressed the people is true, but he was compelled to find money for necessary war."

Rani Rajindar's fall and death, 1791

With Nanun Mal's dismissal came the fall of Rani Rajindar. On

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her return from Mathura after an absence of four months, she wished to see Sahib Singh. She was declined a meeting. All her privileges were gone. She found herself of no value in the State and of no consequence in the palace. All her previous esteem, regard and respect had disappeared. This ingratitude and thanklessness for her most devoted services to the State broke her heart. Thus humiliated and disgraced, she took to bed and died at Patiala after a brief illness in 1791. Griffin writes : "Rani Rajindar was one of the most remarkable women of her age. She possessed all the virtues which men pretend are their own, courage, perseverance and sagacity, without any mixture of the weaknesses which men attribute to women; and, remembering her history and that of Ranis Sahib Kaur and Aus Kaur, who some years later, conducted, with so much ability, the affairs of the Pattiala State it would almost appear that the Phulkian Chiefs excluded, by direct enactment, all women from any share of power from the suspicion that they were able to use it far more wisely than themselves."

Rani Sahib Kanwar, 1773-1799

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Sahib Kanwar was the elder child of Raja Amar Singh. She was born in 1773. She was married at the age of seven in the first week of March, 1780, to Jaimal Singh, three years her senior, son of Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya of Fatahgarh near Dinanagar in Gurdaspur district. Najaf Khan, the prime minister of the Mughal Empire, sent her a special *khilat* on this occasion. She became prime minister of Patiala State at the age of 18 and managed the affairs both in office and in the battlefield most successfully. She was an equal of her aunt, Rani Rajindar as an administrator, general and diplomat. As prime minister, she took Tara Singh of Fatahgarh, her deputy, and appointed Diwan Singh, nephew of Nanun Mal, finance minister or Diwan.

Sahib Kanwar had been in office of prime minister for a short while, when she heard that her husband Jaimal Singh had been imprisoned by his cousin Fatah Singh. At the head of a strong contingent she hurried to Fatahgarh, and after a vehement assault not only liberated the young man, but also restored to him to the independent charge of Fatahgarh. Then she returned to Patiala.

In 1794, a Maratha force under Anta Rao and Lachhman Rao was in Karnal district. They marched towards Patiala. Sahib Kaur got

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ready to oppose, and requested Kanhiya sardars to be ready to come for her help. The Maratha generals gave up their plan.

Nana Rao's expedition, October, 1795

Nana Rao, a Maratha chief, wanted to realize some money from Patiala. He despatched three Cis-Satluj chiefs who were in his camp, Bakht Singh, Gurdit Singh and Karam Singh, to Raja Sahib Singh. Sahib Kanwar won over Nana's agents. She had 5,000 troops. Bhanga Singh and Mahtab Singh were constantly attacking the Maratha camp. The Sikh chiefs came back and frightened him of the Trans-Satluj sardars who were on their way to Patiala. Not deterred, Nana at the head of 12,000 men marched towards Patiala. Sahib Kanwar issued from Patiala. She was joined by the chiefs of Bhadaur, Jind, Kalsia and Thanesar. The total military force was 7,000. She met the enemy on the banks of the Ghaggar river, 35 kms away from Patiala near Murdanpur village. Under superior discipline and greater strength of the Marathas the Sikhs were repulsed.

The Sikhs fell back towards Rajpura. From there they wanted to retire to Patiala. At this juncture Sahib Kanwar showed wonderful courage and bravery. She jumped out of her chariot, unsheathed her sword and shouted : "My brave soldiers! I will never turn my back on the enemy and I will not move an inch from the battlefield. I am determined to fight to the last. Would you tolerate a young lady to be killed while fighting, and be disgraced for ever having sacrificed a woman in the battleground"? She stood in the open with the naked sword in hand. She was only 22 then. This display of heroism touched the hearts of the Sikh soldiers and pride of the Sikh sardars.

The Sikh forces were reorganised in the night, and got ready for attack next morning. The Marathas were encamped at Tepla. Madho Rao Phalke was the commander of the advance guard. He had with him 2,000 horse, two pieces of cannon, and an infantry battalion. The Sikhs returned and attacked Phalke. The remaining Maratha army joined him. The fight continued till evening. Then the Sikhs retired to their camp. Madho Rao removed his dead soldiers from the field to the bank of the Ghaggar for cremation. The Sikhs suddenly attacked him at this place. The Maratha infantry battalion which was kept ready for an emergency, engaged the Sikhs in a close fight. The Sikhs returned to their camp. Another attack was delivered by the Sikhs on the Maratha camp long before dawn. Nana Rao left the field and retired to Karnal.

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Sahib Singh's massacre of pilgrims at Hardwar, 1796

The great Kumbh fair which takes place every twelfth year fell in April, 1796. The pilgrims attended it from all parts of India. Thomas Hardwicke, an eye-witness, estimated their number at twenty-five lakhs. The Gosains managed the affairs at the fair. Those strictly religious-minded among them were clad in sunshine and were called Nangas. They controlled the traffic and maintained peace and order.

About 14,000 Sikhs also arrived at the fair. Raja Sahib Singh 21-years-old misguided youth was their leader, while Rae Singh and Sher Singh Bhangis of Buriya and Jagadhri served under him as deputies. They were accompanied by a large number of Udasi faqirs, followers of Guru Nanak's son Sri Chand. The Sikhs encamped at Jawalapur. The Udasis came to Hardwar, selected a site for their camp on the bank of the Ganga, and without the permission of Gosain Mahant they pitched their tents and set up their flag. The Gosains felt offended for not having been consulted about the choice of the site. They pulled down the tents, removed the flag, and insultingly drove away the Udasis, plundering "the whole property to a considerable amount."

The chief Udasi priest hurried away to the Sikh camp at Jawalapur, and complained to Raja Sahib Singh. The entire Sikh body was divided into numerous units, and each was assigned a certain place for attack on the pilgrims. Then the slaughter began at 8o'clock in the morning on 10 April all along the western bank of the river. About five hundred of the *sadhus* were cut to pieces. A large number of them were drowned in the attempt of crossing the river. Thousands more might have perished, had they not been saved by two British companies with two six-pounders under Captain Murray who happened to be there. Several thousands of *Sadhus* took shelter with him. When the Sikhs came in pursuit of them, the soldiers greeted them with a smart fire. The massacre of *sadhus* was stopped at 3'oclock in the afternoon. Then the Sikhs plundered the non-*sanyasi* pilgrims of all their property until nightfall.[1]

Nahan and As Kaur

As Kaur, daughther of Gurdas Singh of village Chattah, was married by Sahib Singh in 1792. In 1797, she bore him a son and

[1] *Narrative of a Journey to Sirinagur* by Captain Thomas Hardwicke who stayed at Hardwar from April 1 to 19, and saw the whole affair with his own eyes. Vide also *Asiatic Researches*, 1801, 309-21; *Calcutta Review*, LXI, 1875, 44-47.

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heir, Karam Singh. Sahib Kaur was the prime minister, and she never took As Kaur into confidence in any state matter. She bore this grievance quietly. After the birth of a son she became bold and tried to assert herself. Sahib Kaur cared little.

Patiala and Nahan had been on very friendly terms. In 1796 there were some disturbances in Sirmur State. At the head of a force, Sahib Kaur rushed to Nahan, about 125 kms away and restored peace and order. As a token of gratitude the Raja of Nahan presented her with a tall and strong, towering elephant. Sahib Kaur kept this animal for her own use. For these reasons hatred had been smouldering in the hearts of her opponents. During Shah Zaman's invasion, she was sent to her husband to send news to Patiala.

Sahib Singh's submission to Shah Zaman, 1797-1799

Shah Zaman's third invasion, 1796-97 : During the period under review neither Timur Shah nor Shah Zaman came to the Cis-Satluj territory. Twice did Shah Zaman, the last Muslim invader, enter Lahore, and on both these occasions Sahib Singh kept aloof from the struggle in which his brethren of the Trans-Satluj were engaged.

The Rajas of Patiala had risen to their important position owing to the favours conferred upon them by Ahmad Shah Durrani, and consequently they "adhered to the interests of that family."

In the course of Shah Zaman's third invasion Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala adopted the traditional policy of his house. At heart he was with the Shah; but was afraid to associate with him openly for fear of the Majha Sikhs. The Shah's agents were visiting Patiala and Sahib Singh was holding out promises to support the Shah on his arrival at Lahore. As a matter of fact his object was to assist the Shah with money and material only when he would pass through his country on his way to Delhi, which he never did, otherwise to keep him pleased by fair promises and offers of submission.

On 18 December, 1796, Sahib Singh received a letter from his sister Bibi Sahib Kanwar from Shakargarh in Sialkot district now in Pakistan. It stated that the Sikhs were gathering from all directions and were proceeding towards the river Jehlam to oppose the Shah. Ghulam Ahmad Khan, the news-writer of the Shah arrived at Patiala. Sahib Singh gave him five gold coins and two horses as his offering for the Shah, and two gold coins for Nawab Amin-ul-Mulk Nur Muhammad Khan. He then ordered the munshi to prepare a letter bag of brocade

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to enclose the letter to the Shah. He paid Rs. 100 to the news-writer for his expenses.

Early in January, 1797, the Raja handed over a letter to Ghulam Ahmad Khan and dismissed him. The letter stated, "I am your nurtured slave. Your Majesty's father and grandfather extended their royal favour to mine ; and I now hope from your Majesty the continuance of the same. I have verbally communicated all particulars to Ghulam Ahmad Khan, your Majesty's news-writer ; and by him the above will be set forth. After that my vakil also will attend upon Hazur."

On 6 January, 1797, Raja Sahib Singh received a letter of Ghulam Ahmad Khan from Malerkotla. It stated that the Shah had arrived at Lahore. The Raja ordered Karam Chand to buy ammunition worth Rs. 2,000 and to store it in the fort of Dhodhan. He then told his courtiers that he would maintain peace in his country by paying all the money available in the treasury to the Shah. Afterwards the Raja marched away and encamped at Mohandāspur on 7 January. In the afternoon of 8 January, he returned to Patiala. He assured the bankers and other residents of the city to rest satisfied, as he would wait upon the Shah, and keep peace in his territory.

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On 9 January Sahib Singh issued instructions to Mir Qambar Ali to mount guns on the fort and the city walls, and to write to Ghulam Ahmad Khan to hurry to Lahore and deliver his letter to the Shah without further delay.

On 12 January, 1797, a letter of Sher Muhammad Khan, the Wazir of Shah Zaman, was delivered to Sahib Singh by the messenger of Nawab Gulsher Khan of Kunjpura from Lahore. It stated that the offers of Raja's submission had been conveyed to the Shah by Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi. The Wazir held out assurances to the Raja that when he would wait upon the Shah during his march from Lahore to Delhi, all his titles and ranks would be confirmed.

That day Bibi Sahib Kanwar's letter arrived from near Shakargarh in Sialkot district. It stated that the forces of the hill Rajas had scattered on account of Shah's arrival at Lahore. She had also sent her goods and property to the hills. The Bibi advised her brother to unite his forces with those of Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal. She would join him at Patiala when the Shah would leave Lahore for Delhi. If she could not reach in time the Raja should submit or fight the Shah as the circumstances required. The Raja showed this letter to Bhai Lal Singh who was present there, and entered into a solemn agreement with him.

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On 13 January Sahib Singh received letters from Ranjit Singh, Nahar Singh and Amar Singh etc. asking him to join them against the Shah, who did not possess a large army. The Raja remarked : "If the Shah does not command a large army, why have these chiefs fled away ? I am a zamindar, and cannot do without attending upon him."

This day a pair of messengers came to Patiala with Shah's letter. "The Raja took up the letter by rising in his seat, and then he touched it on his head." It said that the Shah had received Raja's letters and that he was satisfied with his conduct. "On learning the subject-matter the Raja was extremely delighted, and turning to Chain Singh said that he would be sent to the Shah."

On 15 January, 1797, Raja Sahib Singh took his seat in the court-yard inside the fort. Here he received Bibi Sahib Kanwar's letter from Narot (25 kms east of Shakargarh). It stated that she was marching to Patiala, while her husband Jiamal Singh was at Shakargarh.

Another news-letter reported that Tara Singh Ghaiba was at Nakodar and Baghel Singh in Hariana country near Hoshiarpur. All of them had despatched their families and chattels to the hills.

On 16 January, the vakil of Bhai Lal Singh arrived at Patiala. The Bhai had inquired what measures were to be adopted in view of the impending danger from Shah Zaman. Sahib Singh replied that Bibiji was expected there in a day or two, and whatever decision would be arrived at after consultation with her, it would be conveyed to him. In the afternoon the Raja visited the town to encourage people.

On 17 January, a letter arrived from Dilsukh Rae, who had been deputed to the camp of Shah Zaman to send news. It stated that he had arrived at Pail, 32 kms before Ludhiana and that he could not proceed farther unless letters were written to Bhag Singh and Dasaundha Singh to allow him the passage through their territory. He also wrote that Bibi Sahib Kanwar's force of 1,000 horse and foot with three pieces of cannon and her goods had reached Pail, while Bibiji with 300 horse was at village Narpat (Jhamat, 16 kms west ?). A pair of messengers who had been sent towards the Jalandhar Doab to communicate news about Bibi Sahib Kanwar returned. They said that Gurdit Singh, Mahtab Singh, and Darbara Singh had been summoned to Nakodar by Tara Singh. They were gathering all the Sikh chiefs, and were preparing to march against the Shah.

On 18 January, the Raja sent letters to Shah Zaman, Wazir Sher

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Muhammad Khan and other nobles. Afterwards letters were addressed to Nawab Wazir of Oudh and Raja Jhau Lal. The Raja summoned Lalu Brahman to the court. He prophesied that Shah Zaman would not proceed farther than Amritsar, and would return home in about a week's time.

On 19 January, it was reported to the Raja that Gurdit Singh, Mahtab Singh and Gulab Singh plundered one Muslim village. The Raja remarked that they did well as the "Musalmans had raised their head in revolt on hearing the news of the Shah's arrival."

About the close of January, 1797, at the time of his return from Lahore, Shah Zaman wrote a letter to Raja Sahib Singh acknowledging his letters and appreciating his loyalty.[1]

After the withdrawal of Shah Zaman from the Panjab, Raja Sahib Singh maintained correspondence with the Kabul Court. The Shah also acknowledged and appreciated his sentiments of loyalty. On 8 May, 1797, Raja Sahib Singh received a letter from Ghulam Ahmad Khan, the Shah's news-writer, dated 12 April. It stated that Shah Zaman was resolved to invade India at the end of the rains. On 25 June, 1797, Shah Zaman's agent arrived at Patiala, and delivered Shah's letters to the Raja. They stated that Shah Zaman was busy in making preparations for a campaign in winter, and asked the Raja to join him with his forces as soon as he would enter the Panjab. The Shah held out to him the prospect of his being appointed the viceroy of the Panjab. Raja Sahib Singh paid a friendly visit to Nahan in December, 1797.

Shah Zaman's fourth invasion, 1798-99

At the time of a fresh invasion of Shah Zaman, Sahib Singh observed the same policy as on the previous occasion. A report stated that when Shah Zaman would advance near Patiala, the Raja would join him.

Sahib Singh did not join the Shah at Lahore as he was afraid of the Majha Sikhs. He maintained communication with Lahore, and was in touch with the Shah's movements.

Islam Khan, the British intelligencer, wrote from Patiala : "On my arrival at Patiala, I found that a *qāsid* had arrived there from Tara Singh who announced the approach of Shah Zaman and proposed

[1]This letter is reproduced in *Husain Shahi*, 313-5. Letters to the same effect were written on the same date to Rae Singh and Sher Singh of Buriya, and to Lahna Singh of Lahore. ibid.

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that the Raja should join him to oppose the Shah. The Raja of Patiala replied that he and his ancestors were the slaves of the Shah and had no power to fight against him, but that on his arrival at Lahore he would attend him.

Later advices revealed that "Bibi Sahib Kaur and Raja Sahib Singh consulted with their officers of state and said the only step they could take was to submit to the king who would soon come : They must prepare presents and advise with the chiefs and relations of the family."

On 3 December Raja Sahib Singh wrote *arzdashts* to the Shah, his Wazir and other Sardars stating that he was his slave and would wait on the Shah on his arrival on the banks of the Satluj. These were sent off by his *hircarrahs*. The Shah never came to that side.

George Thomas's fight with the Sikhs and Sahib Kanwar's bravery, 1798-99

George Thomas was an Irish adventurer. He carved out for himself an independent principality in Haryana with Hansi as his capital. He possessed one thousand horsemen, eight infantry regiments and fifty guns. He cast his own guns, made matchlocks, muskets and powder. Some European officers served in his army. He set up a mint and issued coins in his own name. In order to overcome scarcity of water in the town of Hansi he sank thirty wells, and encouraged traders and merchants to settle there. His principality contained 14 parganahs consisting of 253 villages with a revenue of Rs. 2,86,000. Besides these, he held five more parganahs having 151 villages with a revenue of Rs. 1,44,000 as a service tenure from Marathas.

George Thomas was keen to conquer the Panjab. He first thought of subduing the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs. An opportunity soon offered itself to interfere with the Sikhs. Bakhtmal says that a Hasan Khan came to George Thomas. He said he had received village Kasuhan in jagir from the Raja of Jind. That village was seized by Khushhal Singh, a courtier of Jind. Raja Bhag Singh refused to interfere. He offered Thomas a sum of Rs. 7,000 for the restoration of that village. The village was situated near Jind. Thomas took the money, seized the village and gave it to Hasan Khan.

In November, 1798, Thomas attacked Jind, 40 kms away from Hansi. In the fight he lost 400 men in killed and wounded. Thomas laid siege to the town. Raja Bhag Singh invited help from the Cis-

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Satluj chiefs, in particular from Raja Sahib Singh. At this time Shah Zaman had invaded India. The rumour stated that he was bound for Delhi. The territory of Sikh sardars lay on his way, and they delayed to come to Jind. Raja Bhag Singh was pressing Raja Sahib Singh for aid through messengers and correspondence. Sahib Singh adopted delaying tactics. His sister Bibi Sahib Kanwar, "a woman of masculine and intrepid spirit" put pressure upon him. On 11 December, 1798, she offered herself to take the field, and requested him to furnish her with Rs. 10,000. Sahib Singh flatly refused. She sent her messenger Jaswant Singh to her huband Jaimal Singh Kanhiya at Fatahgarh. He returned on 13 December, with Rs. 12,000. Sahib Singh harshly said that all were full of apprehension on account of Shah Zaman's invasion, and it was improper for her to go to Jind. Bibiji replied that Raja Bhag Singh's house was as his own house ; he had put off going from day-to-day, and now forbade her to go; who then could go as none of the old officers was there."[1]

The Bibi collected some troops and left Patiala without Sahib Singh's approval for Jind on 14 December, 1798. On the way she was joined by Baghel Singh, Dip Singh and Hira Nand, the last of whom was accompanied by 200 horse. As soon as this party came within the striking distance, Thomas subjected them to a heavy artillery fire, and attacked them so vehemently that they fled back. Thomas pursued them. They entered into their own camp consisting of straw huts. The entire camp was set on fire and plundered by Thomas's men.

In the last week of December the troops of Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha, Gurdit Singh of Ladwa, and Bhanga Singh and Mahtab Singh of Thanesar arrived at Jind.

At the beginning of January, 1799, Bibi Sahib Kanwar rallied Sikh troops, numbering about 9,000 under her command and attacked George Thomas. She occupied two redoubts of Thomas in which "many of his best men were cut to pieces." She cut off his supplies. Bibi's bravery inspired common people who had so far remained neutral to attack Thomas's foraging parties. The number of his men began to decrease daily, while that of the Sikhs began to increase.

Thomas continued the siege until the end of February, 1799. Then he decided to raise it. By this time the number of Sikh troops had

[1]Translation of the original as preserved in the NAI records.

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risen to 10,000. After a blockade of 3½ months George Thomas suddenly retired from Jind and hurried towards Hansi. Sahib Kanwar pursued him for some distance, and then she returned to Jind to defend it against any unforeseen attack by the enemy. The Sikh army went by a different route and encamped at Narnaund, situated in the middle between Jind and Hansi. Their object was to attack Thomas in front. Thomas could not be deceived. He fell upon the Narnaund camp of the Sikhs long before dawn. The Sikhs could not hold their ground. Their tents, baggage, howdahs of elephants, 1,000 saddles, 200 horses, and the entire bazar came into the possession of George Thomas. He might have seized their artillery and elephants also, had not his soldiers got out of control in search of plunder.

Sahib Kanwar was controlling the defences of Jind. The Sikhs being defeated by Thomas returned to Jind. To their dismay they found the gates of the town closed upon them. She appeared on the top of the main gate, and scolded and taunted them for their cowardice. She declared she would take the field personally to show them how to fight. The Sikh sardars felt extremely humiliated for "being exceeded in spirit by a woman." They resolved to resume their offensive with the determination either to conquer or to perish in the struggle.

George Thomas lay encamped at Maham. The Sikhs came to attack him, and encamped at a short distance from Maham. At mid-night a band of robbers fell upon the Sikh camp sounding trumpets in the same way as Thomas did. The Sikhs thought that they had been attacked by the full force of Thomas. They abandoned their camp and galloped away. Some of the Sikhs troops were not serious for fighting. The Nabha troops generally held aloof. Karam Singh of Shahabad had been given a bribe of 5,000 ashrafis by Thomas, and he remained inactive.

George Thomas opened negotiations for peace through his Diwan Udai Chand on the condition that each party should remain in possession of its territories held before the siege of Jind. Meanwhile Raja Sahib Singh had also reached Jind. All other Sikh sardars were in favour of accepting the terms. Raja Sahib Singh opposed them, and he refused to sign the treaty. Sahib Kanwar had been at the head of this campaign. She knew that the Sikh chiefs were completely disunited and treachery on the part of some of them could be expected at any time. Like a practical politician she tried

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her level best to persuade her brother to agree to the peace terms. Finding him adamant she signed the treaty on behalf of Patiala as its prime minister. This took place towards the end of March, 1799.

This action of Sahib Kanwar enraged Sahib Singh. She also had made an indiscreet remark which gave a handle to her enemies. She had said : "The Nabha soldiers in comparison with those of Patiala, were no better than *Chamārs*."

The weak-minded Sahib Singh was deeply influenced by his wife As Kaur as well as by other favourites. They complained that Sahib Kaur attached no importance to him and completely ignored him in the management of state matters. Secondly, the Raja of Nahan had given the elephant for him, and not for Sahib Kaur. Thirdly she had built a fort in Sangrur district for herself without Raja Sahib Singh's permission. Fourthly, she had changed the name of the village containing her newly built fort from Bhirian to Ubhewal. Fifthly, she signed the peace terms with George Thomas against the Raja's opposition. Sixthly, she had made derogatory remarks against a sister state. Lastly, she had no business to control Patiala. She was married and must live with her husband at Fatahgarh.

Sahib Singh immediately arrested her and imprisoned her at Patiala. She appealed to George for help. He at once responded to her call, and marched towards Patiala plundering villages on the way. A contingent of the sardar of Bhadaur checked Thomas's advance at village Dirbah, and being defeated fell back. Thomas advanced farther and plundered the town of Bhiwanigarh in Patiala territory. He reached Lakhnaur situated between Ambala and Patiala. Here he was opposed by Diwan Singh. Thomas pushed back to Sunam ravaging the country all the way. Near Narangwal he encountered a Sikh force commanded by Tara Singh Ghaiba whose son was married to a Patiala princess. In the action both sides lost heavily. He rushed towards Rajwānah.

Sahib Singh accepted peace terms, signed the treaty, released his sister, and paid all the expenses of Thomas's expedition. This happened about June, 1799.

Sahib Singh was extremely vindictive and possessed a very cruel nature. The contemporary writers,[1] hold that he was subject to "habitual derangement of intellect." He again imprisoned Sahib Kanwar in the fort of Patiala. She managed to escape and went to Ubhewal in Sangrur

[1]Hamilton, I, 463 and author of *Husain Shahi*, 242.

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district. She was immediately caught and kept in very strict confinement in the fort of Bhiwanigarh. A few days later she died in 1799 at the young age of 26. She seems to have been either murdered or she committed suicide. This was the sad end of the Joan of Arc of the Sikhs.

The role of Bibi Sahib Kanwar was the noblest and the best. In the whole range of Sikh history in character, in bravery, and in statesmanship she occupies the first place. George Thomas called her man and not a woman. In free India she could have been one of the greatest and the best prime ministers.

Obtained a title from Mughal Emperor, 1810

Sahib Singh was extremely greedy for titles. He served the British like a toady, and as a reward requested Colonel David Ochterlony to secure him a superlative title from the Mughal Emperor. In consequence the Colonel obtained for him from Emperor Akbar Shah II in 1810, the title of "Sahib Singh Raja-e-Maharaja Adhiraj Raja-e-Rajagan Mohindar Bahadur."[1] Sahib Singh died in 1813.[2]

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TERRITORIES

Under Amar Singh the Patiala territory extended in the north from the boundary of Malerkotla to the northern parts of Ambala district and some places lying up to the foot of the Shivalik hills. In the west it touched the Lakhi Jungle and the country of Bhattis. On the south it stretched to Hisar, Hansi and Jind. In the east it was surrounded by Kaithal, Thanesar and Shahabad Markanda. Sarhind, a most notable town in the Cis-Satluj region, was included in it. In Amar Singh's time the Patiala state reached almost its maximum extent. It formed roughly a parallelogram 220 kms from east to west and 200 kms from north to south. No addition was made under Sahib Singh. At the close of the eighteenth century the income of Patiala state was estimated at Rs. 6,10,000 a year, and military strength 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry.

NABHA

Nabha was another branch of the Phulkian house. The founder of the family was Gurdit Singh, a cousin of Alha Singh. Gurdit

[1]Griffin in *Panjab Chiefs*, II, 469, says that it was the title of Maharaja.

[2]Sahib Singh had two daughters. Ram Kaur was married to Hari Singh Kalsia of Chhachhrauli, and Prem Kaur was married to Kharak Singh of Shahabad.

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Singh was the eldest son of Ram Singh, while Alha Singh was the third son. In building the family fortunes Alha Singh surpassed all others. Gurdit Singh in collaboration with Alha Singh acquired a fairly large territory and possessed a strong force. His grandson Hamir Singh became the head of the family in 1754. He inherited the estates of Kapurgarh and Sangrur. He considerably added to these estates, including Pakho and Badyala. He carried on his activities independently. Alha Singh had founded Patiala in 1752. Following his example Hamir Singh laid the foundation of Nabha town 26 kms away in 1755, and built a strong fort there. The parganah of Bhadson was acquired by him in 1759. In January, 1764, after the fall of Sarhind Hamir Singh seized the parganahs of Amloh, Bhagsu, and Wirro. Hamir Singh was treacherously imprisoned by his cousin Gajpat Singh of Jind in 1774. Gajpat Singh then attacked Sangrur which was the capital of Hamir Singh. Hamir Singh's wife Rani Deso resisted the invader bravely for four months. She capitulated when reduced to starvation. Since then Sangrur remained in possession of Jind until the dissolution of Indian states in the middle of the twentieth century. Rani Deso was the daughter of sardar Makhan Singh of Rori. It was included in the Hisar division which was under the Mughals. Hamir Singh captured Rori from Rahimdad Khan, governor of Hisar in 1776. Hamir Singh married his daughter to Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanhiya. He struck his own coins which marked his sovereignty and independence. The silver coin was called the Nabha rupee. Its value was 15 annas against 16 annas, of the British Indian rupee. Gold coins were struck occasionally. Both the coins bore the following inscription :

Deg-o-teg-o-fatah nusrat be darang,
yaft az Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh.
Jalūs maimanat mānūs Sarkar Nabha, Sambat 1911.

(Entertainment, sword, victory, prompt success are obtained from Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh.)

Hamir Singh died in 1783. The Nabha rulers issued coins in the names of Sikh Gurus, and not in the names of Mughal or Afghan kings. They have been true and sincere devotees of Sikhism, and did not toe the Patiala line.

Hamir Singh was succeeded by his eight-year-old son Jaswant Singh. In preference to Jaswant Singh's mother, his step-mother Rani Deso, became Regent of the kingdom. She was a brave lady and could handle state affairs successfully both in peace and war. Her

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daughter Subha Kanwar was married to Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat son of Gujar Singh of Lahore. Rani Deso carried on the administration ably and well up to her death in 1790. Her enemy Gajpat Singh of Jind had died four years earlier.

Jaswant Singh managed the affairs of the state well. He submitted to the Marathas in 1801, and agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 9,510 to them. After the defeat of the Marathas he submitted to the English. When Lord Lake pursued Jaswant Rao Holkar into the Panjab in 1805, the Nabha chief joined the British expedition at the head of his regiment. In return for this service he was assured integrity of his territories and exemption from tribute. Nabha passed under the British protection in May, 1809. At the close of the eighteenth century the rulers of the Nabha State enjoyed high reputation for personal character.

General Ochterlony found Jaswant Singh "by far the most sober and intelligent of all the Phulkian rulers." Sir Lepel Griffin considered him "the nearest approach to the civilized among the whole set of rude barons." The income of Nabha was Rs. 1,50,000 and cavalry 400.

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JIND

Sukhchain Singh

Among the descendants of Phul, the founder of the Jind family was Sukhchain Singh. He began as a simple zamindar, like Patiala and Nabha. They were all *mālguzārs* and tributary to the Mughal government. Sukhchain Singh acquired fairly large tract of land for himself. He divided his territory into four parts. He kept Jind for himself. Bālānwāli was given to his eldest son Alam Singh. Badrukhan was assigned to his second son Gajpat Singh who was destined to be the builder of Jind State. The youngest son Bulaki Singh got Dialpur.

Sukhchain Singh as a big landlord paid land revenue directly into the government treasury at Delhi, because of all the Phulkian states, Jind was nearest to Delhi, 128 kms distant. He fell into arrears. In spite of repeated reminders he failed to make payment of the royal dues. In 1743 a force was sent to Jind to realize the amount. Sukhchain Singh managed to escape. Chaudhri Gurdit Singh of Nabha instigated the Mughal officers to take strict action against him. His wife Āgan with her five year old son Gajpat Singh was taken to Delhi and was imprisoned. Āgan's maid servant, a Muslim Mirāsan, disguised herself in the clothes of her mistress, and Āgan in

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Mirāsan's clothes with her son escaped to Jind. Sukhchain Singh died in 1758.

Gajpat Singh, 1738-1786

Gajpat Singh was born on 15 April, 1738. Badrukhan was already with him. In 1755 he captured the imperial parganah of Safidon. Gajpat Singh was present in the Dal Khalsa along with Alha Singh and Hamir Singh at the conquest of Sarhind province in January, 1764. He seized a large territory including the towns of Karnal, Panipat, Kasuhan, Kharkhaudah and Sakrodah. These places formed a part of the crownlands, the revenues of which met the expenses of the Emperor and the royal household. Shah Alam II, the Mughal Emperor, was at Allahabad, and the capital and crownlands were under the control of Najib-ud-daulah Rohilla. Gajpat Singh waited on Najib and undertook to remit revenues of the parganahs regularly and punctually. He called himself *mālguzār* or revenue payer.

Gajpat Singh failed to pay the revenues for three years, 1764-67, amounting to one lakh and a half rupees. He was summoned to Delhi in 1767. According to Khushwaqt Rae[1] and Gian Singh[2] he was converted to Islam and was circumcised, and was kept a prisoner for three years. He secured his release in 1771 by a promise to collect the revenue and make payment shortly. He left behind his son, Mehar Singh, as a hostage. He paid three lakhs of rupees and secured the liberty of his son as well as the title of Raja for himself with the privilege of issuing his own coins. The royal firman to this effect is dated 25 Shawal 1185 AH (31 January, 1772 AD) under the seal of Emperor Shah Alam II. Thus from a zamindar he became a ruler following the example of Patiala. His coins were exactly similar to Patiala coins. They were called Jindia rupees. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia administered pahul to him a second time and ate with him from the same dishes publicly as a token of Gajpat Singh's reconversion to Sikhism.

Samru fails in seizing Jind territory, 1773-74

In June, 1773, Abdul Ahad Khan, a minister of Delhi, obtained for himself the *faujdari* of Sarhind province, and appointed Samru, a German adventurer, husband of famous Begam Samru, his deputy.

[1]Khushwaqt Rae, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, M/800, folios 66a, 120a; M/420, p. 288.

[2]Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, 816.

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He was given charge of the districts of Sonepat and Panipat, and was authorised to seize whatever territory he could wrest from the Sikhs, in particular from Gajpat Singh of Jind. Samru assumed his duties in the beginning of July, 1773, at the head of nearly 2,000 soldiers, some of whom were Europeans, with five pieces of cannon, a considerable quantity of ammunition and six elephants. He established his head-quarters at Gharaunda, situated halfway between Panipat and Karnal. The Sikhs hovered about Samru's camp day and night wherever he went, and gave him no rest. In an open engagement he was defeated. Samru maintained a precarious position until September, 1774, when he resigned.

Raj Kanwar's marriage, 1774

Gajpat Singh's daughter, Raj Kanwar was to be married to Mahan Singh Sukarchakia of Gujranwala in 1774. A serious incident took place at the time of marriage. Mahan Singh had come with a large party of about ten thousand horsemen to Badrukhan, which was then the capital of Jind State. The horses and camels of the marriage party were let loose to graze in the neighbouring pasture ground called *Bir*, which belonged to Nabha State. Yaqub Khan was a trusted officer of Raja Hamir Singh of Nabha. With the connivance of his master, whose consent had not been obtained by Gajpat Singh, Yaqub Khan attacked the Jind party looking after the animals. Raja Gajpat Singh took no notice of this affair until the marriage party had departed.

Gajpat Singh was determined to retaliate. He could not fight Hamir Singh in the open. So he resorted to a stratagem. He feigned illness, and spread the rumour, that he was on death-bed. He expressed a keen desire to see his cousin Raja Hamir Singh. Hamir Singh came accompanied by Yaqub Khan. Both were immediately seized. Yaqub Khan was tortured to death, while Hamir Singh was imprisoned. An army was sent to seize the Nabha territories. Amloh and Bhadson were occupied and Sangrur, the capital of Nabha, was besieged by Gajpat Singh himself. It was heroically defended by Hamir Singh's wife Rani Deso[1] for four months, when she was forced to surrender by starvation. On the intercession of Raja Amar Singh of Patiala, Hamir Singh was set free. Amloh and Bhadson were restored, but Sangrur was never given up and was made the capital of Jind State. For the protection of Jind town he built a fort there in 1775.

[1]Griffin calls her Dago.

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Rahimdad Khan killed at Jind, May, 1776

Abdul Ahad was anxious to try another man as his deputy for Panipat and Karnal districts. In April, 1776, he appointed Mullan Rahimdad Khan Rohilla with a strong force and a park of artillery. Of all the Sikh sardars and princes Gajpat Singh alone was meek and modest. Besides his territory was nearest to Delhi. The Mullan laid siege to Jind, and demanded a large sum of money. His troops laid waste Jind[1] territory. Gajpat Singh sought assistance from Patiala, Nabha and Kaithal, his relatives. Diwan Nanun Mal of Patiala came with a strong contingent. Hamir Singh of Nabha, Bhais of Kaithal and several other Sikh chiefs of the neighbourhood also joined him. The Sikh forces reached Jind after midnight, and immediately delivered an assault upon the enemy. A large number of Mullan's men fled away. The Mullān was struck by three balls in the head and body, and was instantly killed.[2] Polier, a Swiss engineer, lived in Delhi from 1771 to 1779. He wrote : "Thus fell Rahimdat Khan, a chief of the greatest interpidity, and at the same time it is said a man of principles, true to his word, and religious, strict partisan of the Mahomedan faith."

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Gajpat Singh plunders crownlands near Delhi, October-November, 1776, 1778

The Sikhs decided to retaliate. A huge body of about 60,000 under Amar Singh of Patiala and Gajpat Singh of Jind, marched to Gohana, 70 kms north-west of Delhi, and plundered the neighbouring country. They also laid waste Hansi, Hisar and other places.

In February, 1778, Gajpat Singh with other Sikhs entered the Ganga Doab. They penetrated into the country as far as Khurja, 83 kms south of Delhi, and scoured the whole country between the Jamuna and the Ganga. Tahmas Khan Miskin who took a prominent part in their pursuit writes:

"Zulfiqar-ud-daulah (Najaf Khan) wrote urgent letters to Nawab Afrasiyab Khan to march immediately to Ghausgarh for assistance. Afrasiyab Khan asked for my opinion. I replied that we must go there, but the Sikh horsemen are wandering everywhere from village to

[1]The town of Jind was encircled by a mud wall with four gates, the Safidon-wala to the east, the Ram Rae and the Kathana in the south, and Jhanjwala in the west. There were many fruit gardens on all sides. (*Punjab States Gazetteers*, XVII, A, 333).

[2]The Mullan's tomb stands within the principal gate of Jind.

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village. Allow me with a body of 200 horse to patrol the country as far as Sikandra, Dadri, Dasna and Dhaulana, and you can follow me to punish the Sikhs. He approved of this plan and gave me leave. I toured all these places in two days. With the help of God the Sikhs fled away in disappointment. Two Sikhs were realizing tribute from a village four kos (12 kms) from Shahjahanabad. They took to flight on my approach. Afrasiyab followed me to Ghazi-ud-din Nagar (Ghaziabad). Here he received several letters from Nawab Abdul Ahad Khan, inviting him to Delhi. Leaving me in charge of the troops, he went to the capital. He stayed there for a fortnight, and cleverly removed the differences existing between Najaf Khan and Abdul Ahad. Afrasiyab then came to the army. We advanced stage by stage and reached Ghausgarh."

The Sikhs were expelled from the Doab pursued by the imperialists about the end of April, 1778. They reached Karnal. Raja Gajpat Singh and Dalel Singh of Malod were ready to submit. They were opposed in this design by Bhag Singh of Thanesar. The imperial generals decided to punish Bhag Singh. They captured Budhakhera, 6 kms north-east of Karnal, and Baragaon, 6 kms north of Budhakhera. At that place the Sikh chiefs came to terms promising not to plunder the royal domains.

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Joined Abdul Ahad's expedition, 1779

In June, 1779, Abdul Ahad, accompanied by Prince Farkhundah Bakht, led an expedition against the Cis-Satluj Sikhs. He encamped at Karnal during the rainy season. Gajpat Singh, the most loyal Sikh chief of the Emperor, paid homage to the Prince. Baghel Singh who bore long-standing hostility to Gajpat Singh advised Abdul Ahad to imprison Gajpat Singh in order to extract a large sum of money from him. The Nawab put him in confinement. Gajpat Singh secured his liberty by promising to pay two lakhs of rupees. After this he became Nawab's confidant.

Tahmas Khan Miskin who was present in this expedition writes : "Gajpat Singh who had been in charge of the administration of the Karnal district for twenty years presented himself in the camp. Having taken responsibility for all the affairs of the neighbourhood, he became the Nawab's chief intimate and sole adviser in all the business of the government. The Nawab regulated his march according to his instruction and guidance. He enlisted every Sikh who came in search of service. Every Sikh chief who interviewed him received elephants,

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aigrettes, etc., according to his rank. He appointed Sikh military posts in places where the inhabitants had fled away in fear of the royal troops. Abdul Ahad Khan was a very wise and experienced old man, and was in the habit of studying books of history and literature. But as he had fallen a victim to misfortune, he lost all of his sagacity. He avoided his own companions, gave entire confidence in public as well as in private affairs to the Sikhs, and whenever he undertook any expedition, it was done at their advice. He did not take thir fact into consideration that they were non-Muslims, and however attached outwardly they were to him, they would deceive him just in the critical hour."

Abdul Ahad broke up his camp at Karnal on 9 September, 1779. On this day he sent Gajpat Singh along with other Sikh sardars to bring in his camp Desu Singh of Kaithal. Desu Singh came and offered a nazar and received a *khilat*. Abdul Ahad demanded three lakhs of rupees. He offered two lakhs. Gajpat Singh met the Nawab in the night on 13 September, and said : "The tribute from us can be realized at any moment, but it is very difficult to get money from Desu Singh. As a politic device arrest all the sardars including myself. Afterwards release us and keep Desu Singh in confinement until he pays his dues". The Nawab did accordingly. A tribute of four lakhs was settled upon Desu Singh. Three Lakhs of rupees were immediately realized and for the balance his son Lal Singh was taken as a hostage. Desu Singh was allowed to go on 26 September, 1779.

Diwan Nanun Mal of Patiala arrived in the imperial camp on 12 September. He was lodged in Gajpat Singh's camp. He was friendly to Patiala. The Nawab demanded Amar Singh's presence in his camp. Gajpat Singh went to Patiala and came back with a letter from Amar Singh on 17 September. Gajpat Singh strongly pleaded that Amar Singh's tribute should be accepted from Diwan Nanun Mal, and Amar Singh should be exempted from attendance.

Abdul Ahad was moving his camp toward Patiala. On 28 September he encamped at Ghuram, 25 kms south of Patiala. Gajpat Singh's Diwan, Daya Singh, who had been sent to Amar Singh, returned. Gajpat Singh and Nanun Mal told the Prince and the Nawab that if they guaranteed Raja Amar Singh's safety by swearing on the Quran, they would persuade him to present himself before the Prince. The Nawab swore on the holy book. Both the chiefs left for Patiala.

Amar Singh never came. Gajpat Singh paid no tribute. The Nawab

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was frightened as the Trans-Satluj Sikhs were coming to help Raja Amar Singh. Abdul Ahad began his retreat on 14 October. On the way he was frequently attacked by the Sikhs. He lost the money taken from Desu Singh. Having sustained heavy damages he reached Karnal on 18 October in a miserable plight. Tahmas Khan Miskin wrote : "Fighting and shooting on the way and facing thousands of trials and troubles, hungry and thirsty, and suffering terribly, they again arrived at Karnal and encamped there."

Gajpat Singh in Mirza Shafi's camp, 1780-81

During Abdul Ahad's campaign Gajpat Singh had taken no part in harassing the imperial army. Further at the end of it he conveyed his allegiance to prime minister Najaf Khan. In consequence the Wazir sent him a letter of appreciation along with a *khilat* on 23 February, 1780.

About the end of November, 1780, the imperial general Shafi accompanied by Zabita Khan Rohilla, crossed the Jamuna and encamped at Kunjpura. Gajpat Singh waited upon them. On 8 December, 1780, Shafi imprisoned him, and tried to extract a large sum of money from him. Zabita Khan protested against this unfair treatment meted out to a loyal subject. When Shafi paid no heed to his entreaties and threats, Zabita Khan left for Delhi on 10 December to lodge a complaint with Najaf Khan. On 21 March, 1781, Gajpat Singh promised to pay tribute in a week's time. He as well as his Diwan was granted a *doshala* and a *goshwara* On 27 April Shafi received from Gajpat Singh a sum of Rs. 25,000.

On 8 May, 1781, Shafi received a written agreement from Gajpat Singh to the effect that he would pay him one lakh of rupees at the time of his reaching Kunjpura and fifty thousand rupees in Karnal. He would hand over his son by way of security for two lakhs of rupees, and he himself would remain in attendance upon him. If he intrigued with the Sikhs against the Emperor, his country should be laid waste. Shafi agreed to let him be free. He granted him a *khilat* of six pieces with a jewelled ornament for the turban, an elephant and a horse. A *khilat* of five pieces was given to his Diwan, Nigahi Singh. Gajpat Singh's companions including Nanun Singh received four *doshalas*. Gajpat Singh was then allowed to leave for Kunjpura in the company of Dalel Khan and of Captain Sayyid Ali and Jaisingh Rae who commanded two sepoy battalions.

On 17 May, 1781, Shafi wrote to Najaf Khan that if he would send

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for Gajpat Singh to Delhi and would demand his revenues from the Mirza, he would desert his post, and would proceed to the capital. Najaf Khan replied that he would not require Gajpat Singh's money from him; but Gajpat Singh must attend the court, otherwise the imperial prestige would suffer. On 22 May Shafi wrote an urgent letter to Jaisingh Rae to bring Gajpat Singh immediately to his camp. On 29 May Shafi wrote to Najaf Khan : "The soldiers are demanding their salary, and they insist on going to Delhi with Gajpat Singh."

Gajpat Singh at the imperial court, 1781

On Ist June Shafi wanted to send Gajpat Singh to Delhi, but hesitated to do so for fear of the Sikhs. On 2 June Shafi sent Gajpat Singh to Delhi accompanied by the battalions of Kajjar and Murad Beg. On 4 June Gajpat Singh, Nigahi Singh and Diwan Singh were presented to Najaf Khan by Mahdi Quli Khan. Each of them offered a nazar of five gold coins, two gold coins and five rupees respectively. Gajpat Singh was granted a *khilat* of five pieces, Nigahi Singh of three pieces, and Diwan Singh three *doshalas* and two pieces of shawl. On 6 June at the request of Murad Beg, Gajpat Singh was placed in the custody of Mahdi Quli Khan. On 9June Shafi's letter was received by Najaf Khan. He suggested that the country west of river Jamuna should be placed in the charge of Gajpat Singh and he should be allowed to spend the rainy season in the Ganga Doab. Najaf Khan ordered Shafi "not at all to cross the Jamuna." On 12 June Ram Ratan Modi submitted a report to Najaf Khan regarding Gajpat Singh's revenues. The total revenues amounted to six lakhs of rupees. Out of this two lakhs and forty thousand had been paid to Shafi. Two lakhs and ten thousand were promised in eight days. The remaining one lakh and fifty thousand were to be paid in two months in three instalments. Until the full payment hostages were to be given by Gajpat Singh. On 13 June it was reported to Najaf Khan that Gajpat Singh's deputy was arranging for money and wished that Gajpat Singh should be given leave. Najaf Khan insisted on immediate payment.

On 12 July Najaf Khan fixed Gajpat Singh's tribute at six lakhs, out of which he realized three lakhs immediately. He kept his son as a hostage for the payment of the balance. He granted him robes of honour, a jewelled ornament for the turban, a sword, a necklace of pearls, a frilled palankeen, a horse and an elephant. He conferred upon him the title of Maharaja. Gajpat Singh's son, his Diwan and other companions were also given *khilats.*

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Miserable condition of the royal family

Gajpat Singh was the only milch cow in the hands of the Mughal court. The other Sikh chiefs and Marathas who were really responsible for squeezing the crownlands went scot free. On account of the constant Sikh raids in the crownlands no revenues were forthcoming for the support of the Emperor and the royal family. The ladies of the imperial harem threatened to link their arms together and drown themselves in the Jamuna rather than starve themselves. One day, driven to extremity the Emperor told his slave Qambar :

"If you eat any meal today, it will be drinking swine's blood. Go to Najaf Khan's house and sit down before him (in *dharna*). Do not eat anything, but prevent him too from eating, till the allowance of the harem is realized in full."

Another day His Majesty told Maulvi Ataullah : "My condition has come to this that I have no second coat in my wardrobe."

On another occasion the servants in the royal palace struck work for non-payment of their wages. None came to attend the Emperor. "He became sorely vexed, and beating his head with both his hands he exclaimed in the bitterness of his heart against the severity of his fate, deploring the humiliated condition to which he had been reduced, from a state of a sovereign, commanding wealth and empire, to that of an individual abandoned by his most menial dependents."

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Cordial relations with Patiala

Gajpat Singh maintained cordial relations with Patiala. He rendered good help in suppressing the revolt of Himmat Singh. He joined Amar Singh in plundering crownlands in 1776. He accompanied Amar Singh in an expedition against Hari Singh Dallewalia of Sialba. During Abdul Ahad's campaign in 1779, he supported Amar Singh as best as he could. On Amar Singh's death in 1781 many revolts occurred in Patiala State. Gajpat Singh gave full help to Diwan Nanun Mal in restoring peace and order. In 1785 many villages of Patiala in the neighbourhood of Ambala were occupied by other Sikh sardars. Bibi Rajindar, first cousin of Raja Amar Singh, Diwan Nanun Mal and Gajpat Singh recovered Patiala villages. During this expedition Gajpat Singh got an attack of fever. He returned to Safidon where he passed away on 18 January, 1786.

His family

Gajpat Singh was married to the daughter of Kishan Singh of

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Monshia. He had four children by her, three sons, Mehar Singh, Bhag Singh, Bhup Singh, and a daughter, Raj Kanwar, who became the mother of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. On the death of his brother Alam Singh in 1754 Gajpat Singh married his widow, and Balanwali passed into his possession. He had a daughter by her named Begama.

Gajpat Singh had divided his estate in his lifetime among his three sons. His eldest son, Mehar Singh, was given Khanna. He predeceased his father in 1780. The second son Bhag Singh was kept with him at Jind. The youngest son Bhup Singh was assigned Badrukhan and Barandhpur.

Bhag Singh, 1786-1819

Bhag Singh was a wise, shrewd and diplomatic person. He cleverly managed the state affairs. He possessed great foresight and could properly gauge the political situation in his neighbourhood.

Bhag Singh was born in 1765. He succeeded his father in January, 1786, in the possession of Jind, Safidon and Sangrur. He voluntarily paid succession duty, and received from Emperor Shah Alam II the territories of Gohana and Kharkhaudah in jagir. In 1794 he helped Bibi Sahib Kanwar of Patiala in beating back the Maratha expedition led by Anta Rao and Lachhman Rao.

George Thomas, an Irish adventurer, had established himself as an independent chief in Haryana at Georgegarh and Hansi. His territories touched the borders of Jind State. In the winter of 1798-99, he plundered Safidon, and then besieged Jind. Forces of Patiala, Nabha, Kaithal and other places came to help Bhag Singh, and after four month's siege Thomas was forced to retire.

Delhi, Agra and the neighbouring country were under Daulat Rao Sindhia of Gwalior. A French officer, General Perron, was in Sindhia's service, and was in charge of northern Maratha districts. Both Perron and the Sikhs considered George Thomas a great nuisance and threat. In the battle Bhag Singh was present. George Thomas was defeated and driven away in 1801.[1]

Then the second Anglo-Maratha war broke out. Lord Lake was in charge of the northern theatre. Bhag Singh was the first Sikh chief to

[1]A son of George Thomas commanded a regiment escorting Prince Taimur son of Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk of Afghanistan to Kabul in 1838.
[Shaham at Ali, *Sikhs and Afghans*, p. 47.]

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join Lord Lake in his campaign against the Marathas and General Perron. He served the British most faithfully and loyally during his lifetime. He had become dumb in 1810 after illness.

TERRITORIES

Amloh, Badrukhan, Barsat, Basian, Bazidpur, Bhadson, Faridpur, Gohana, Jind, Karnal, Kasuhan, Khanna, Kharkhaudah, Lajwana, Lalpur, Ludhiana, Mandāli, Morandah, Panipat, Safidon, and Sangrur. Revenues four lakhs. Army 1,500 horse and 500 foot. The net annual income of the state at the end of the eighteenth century was calculated at Rs. 1,25,000.

MALOD

Bakhtmal was the fourth son of Rama and brother of Alha Singh of Patiala State. His son Man Singh conquered the district of Malod from the Afghans of Malerkotla in 1754. He died in 1778 leaving behind two sons, Dalel Singh and Bhag Singh. The elder brother Dalel Singh got Malod proper and two-thirds of the estate. Dalel Singh was a vegetarian and he prohibited hunting, shooting and slaughtering in his district. In 1806 Maharaja Ranjit Singh passed through Malod. Dalel Singh did not wait upon him. Ranjit Singh arrested his elder son, placed a heavy load on his head, and forced him to walk for a long distance like a menial slave. His father secured the young man's liberty by paying a fine of Rs. 22,000. Dalel Singh captured Khiyali and Sahur from Raekot in 1807. The sardars of Malod were treated as jagirdars of the British Government after 1809.[1] They helped the British in the Gorkha War in 1815. Dalel Singh died in 1824.

[1]Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, 852; Griffin, *The Minor Phulkian Families*, 274; Nawazish Ali, 298.

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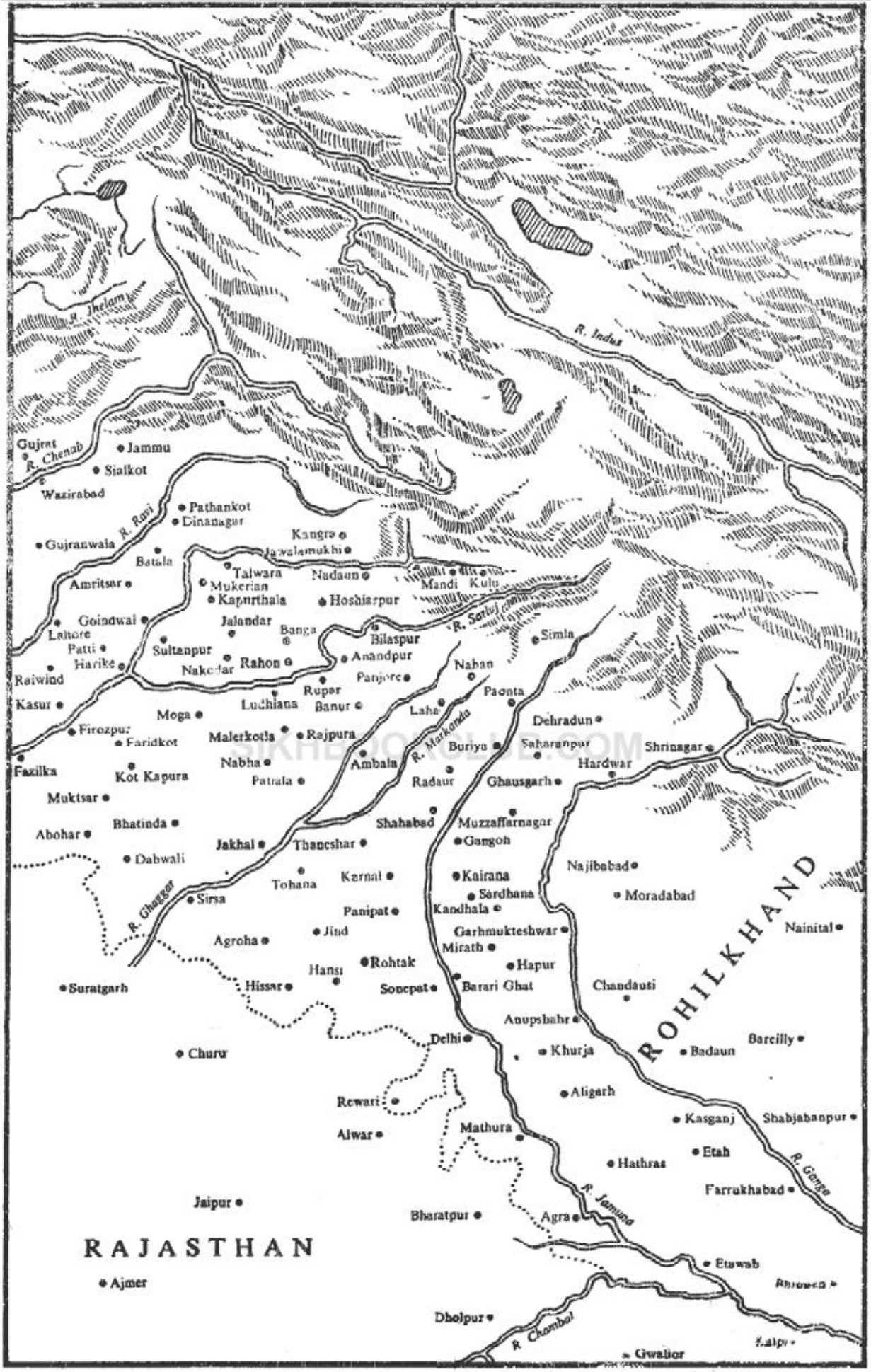
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Part Two

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The Taruna Dal

The Taruna Dal

The Taruna Dal consisted of five misls, Bhangi, Kanhiya, Nakai, Ramgarhia and Sukarchakia. They turned to the western region. It lay between the rivers Beas or Ghara and the Indus, or generally the provinces of Lahore and Multan. With the exception of Majha, the rest of the country was almost entirely inhabited by Muslims. A Musalman had faith only in a Muslim government. Under a non-Muslim government he usually remained sullen and dejected. He therefore always preferred a Muslim invader from the north-west. The Sikh sardars of the Taruna Dal gave the Muslims every facility except the loud call for prayer in a mosque, but the vast majority of them could not be reconciled to the Sikh rule.

It is most remarkable to note that the Taruna Dal overcame the opposition of the Muslim population as well as of foreign invaders from the north-west. The Muslims from all over India and the Muslim chiefs including the Mughal Emperors, and the Rohillas made frantic appeals to the invaders to come and destroy the indigenous national spirit in this country. The invaders welcomed these opportunities. But after Ahmad Shah Durrani, none could cross river Beas. From Attock to Amritsar the invader was so frequently opposed and he was so obstinately hindered at every step that the enemy's morale was completely broken. As regards the Muslim princes in India none dared to advance beyond Delhi. Such was the solid concrete wall erected by the brave Khalsa between Delhi and Attock. As a consequence the Muslim princes in India could not get their rejuvenation from abroad and lost their power of resistance.

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CHAPTER 10

The Bhangi Misl

The word Bhangi is derived from bhang or hemp, a plant of wild growth found in the jungles of the Panjab, and in abundance along the river banks. When pounded in a mortar with a pestle and sifted through a piece of coarse cloth, it leaves behind a thick liquid of green colour. Its drink is intoxicating and soothes the effect of heat in summer. A particular group of the Dal Khalsa liberally indulged in this drink, and profusely entertained others with it. At the time of fighting, it made its lovers furious and reckless. On account of addiction to it, this group of the Khalsa came to be called Bhangi.

This *nom de plume* attracted the sweeper class also called Bhangi to join them. They were freely welcomed by this band of the Khalsa among them. Some of them were offered important posts. The personal bodyguard of Jhanda Singh was a sweeper who shot his master dead at Jammu under temptation of a high reward. Gujar Singh appointed a sweeper, jet black in colour and so named Kālā in charge of the most advanced post about 60 kms east of Attock. He was a doughty warrior and held in check the warlike neighbouring chiefs. Originally Kāli Sarae came to be called Kala Sarae near Hasan Abdal still commemorates his name.

In the Dal Khalsa the Bhangi Misl was supreme. Qazi Nur Muhammad participated in many battles against the Sikhs. Out of nine prominent leaders in the Sikh army mentioned by him six belonged to the Bhangi Misl, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lahna Singh, Gujar Singh, Gulab Singh and Ram Das who was most probably attached to this Misl. The Bhangi Misl seized territories all over the Panjab, from river Indus to the Jamuna and from Kashmir mountains to Multan, on the extreme frontiers as well as in the heart of the country.

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Chhajja Singh

The first man given to bhang was Chhajja Singh, a Jat of village Panjwar, 13 kms from Amritsar near Taran Taran. He took pahul from Guru Gobind Singh, and fought in many battles under him. He invited a number of young men from Majha to join him and thus became the leader of the Bhangi band.

Bhuma Singh

On his death Bhuma Singh,[1] a Dhillon Jat of village Hung in parganah Wadni near Moga succeeded him. He gathered power in men, money and material during Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739. On the death of Zakariya Khan in 1745, Bhuma Singh's jatha was one of twenty-five bands. He seems to have lost his life in the Chhota Ghallughara or minor massacre during April-June, 1746. He commanded a body of about three hundred men. It is believed that the name of the band, Bhangi originated with Bhuma Singh. When the Sikhs gathered at Amritsar, Bhuma Singh pounded bhang for the Khalsa, particularly in summer when its drink produced cooling and soothing effect. Bhuma Singh was therefore called Bhangi. The statement of Hutchison and Vogel that "Jammu was first invaded by Bhamma Singh in 1761"[2] is not correct as in 1748 at the formation of the Dal Khalsa Hari Singh Bhangi was the leader of Bhangi band.

Hari Singh Bhangi

Bhuma Singh's nephew and adopted son Hari Singh Dhillon succeeded him. His father was Bhup Singh, a zamindar of Patoh near Wadni. Khushwaqt Rae calls it "Patokhe in the jungle country", obviously referring to Malwa. Gian Singh calls him a resident of Hung. Hari Singh took pahul from Dip Singh Shahid. At the time of the foundation of the Dal Khalsa, Hari Singh was acknowledged the head of the Bhangi Misl as well as the leader of the Taruna Dal. He raised the Bhangi Misl to a halo of glory and made it the strongest of all the misls. He created a fine army of 20,000 dashing youths. Hari Singh captured Panjwar in Taran Taran parganah and established his headquarters first at village Sohal, later at Gilwali, both in the district of Amritsar, and lastly he set himself up at Amritsar. There he established a residential quarter with a market called Hari Singh ka

[1]Griffin and Massy call Bhuma Singh an inhabitant of Kasur which is wrong.
[2]*History of the Panjab Hill States*, II, Lahore, 1933, p. 89.

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Katra to meet his requirements for board and lodging. He started construction of a fort called Qila Bhangian. Its remains could recently be traced behind the Lun Mandi (Salt Market).[1]

Hari Singh was a bold adventurer. He was at his best in fighting in the regions purely inhabited by Muslims. There he entered like a roaring lion in the land of bears, leopards and panthers, and subdued them.

Ahmad Shah Durrani massacred the Sikhs in the battle of Kup on February 5, 1762. He remained in the Panjab up to December 12, 1762. Immediately after his retirement Hari Singh attacked Khwajah Saeed Ka Kot, and carried off a lot of arms from there. In 1763 along with Kanhiyas and Ramgarhias he sacked Kasur. In 1764 he advanced towards Multan. At first he plundered Bahawalpur. Multan was thoroughly ravaged. He crossed river Indus and realized tribute from the Baluchi chiefs in the districts of Muzaffargarh, Derah Ghazi Khan and Derah Ismail Khan. While returning he received tributes from the local chiefs of Pind Dadan Khan region amounting to Rs. 4,000. On his departure this tract was occupied by Charat Singh Sukarchakia. Farther on his way he reduced Jhang, Chiniot and Sialkot. He made Jammu tributary.[2] Latif says that Hari Singh "penetrated into the Kashmir valley, where, however, they were repulsed with loss."

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Among the Sikhs only Phulkian chiefs led by Alha Singh of Patiala were diplomatic in their dealings. Patiala and Jind always submitted to Delhi, Kandhar and Kabul, as well as to the Dal Khalsa. In March, 1765, Alha Singh purchased the title of Raja from Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Dal Khalsa did not like his submission to the foreign invader. Hari Singh persuaded the Dal Khalsa to punish Alha Singh. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia the leader of the Dal Khalsa was reluctant. He was inclined towards Alha Singh and was jealous of Hari Singh's power and influence. The Taruna Dal under Hari Singh was furious. The Dal Khalsa marched upon Patiala. Hari Singh delivered the attack. The Budha Dal under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia remained inactive and mere spectators. In the battle Hari Singh was killed, to the great

[1]Muhammad Hasan calls it Loha Mandi (Iron Market). *Tarikh-e-Patiala*, 132 fn. Hari Singh's example was followed later on in building forts at Amritsar by Gujar Singh Bhangi, Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. (Massy, I, 464).

[2]Hutchison and Vogel are of the view that Hari Singh plundered Jammu in 1762. This does not appear possible as Jammu was tributary to Ahmad Shah Durrani who was present in the Panjab from January to December in 1762.

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relief of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Alha Singh. Khushwaqt Rae says that Hari Singh was poisoned to death, which may be true. Griffin says that Alha Singh was jealous of Bhangi misl.

The most important chiefs serving under Hari Singh were Gujar Singh, Lahna Singh, Milkha Singh, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Karam Singh Chhina, Bagh Singh Kalaswalia, Rae Singh of Jagadhri, Sher Singh of Buriya, Sudh Singh Dodia, Sahib Singh and Tara Singh Sialkotias, and Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala. His income was about 15 lakhs.

Jhanda Singh

Hari Singh had two wives. By his first wife, daughter of Chaudhri Mulla of Panjwar, he had two sons, Jhanda Singh[1] and Ganda Singh, and by his second wife three sons, Charat Singh, Diwan Singh and Desu Singh. His eldest son Jhanda Singh succeeded him. He raised the power and prestige of the misl to its zenith.

Bahawalpur, 1766

Shortly after his accession, in 1766 Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, at the head of a strong force marched towards Multan. On the way they halted on the right bank of the Satluj opposite Bahawalpur. Mubarik Khan was the ruler of Bahawalpur from 1749 to 1772. He came to oppose them. Shuja Khan, the governor of Multan, joined Mubarik Khan. A grim battle was fought between the Sikhs and the Muslims. Neither side could claim victory. It was agreed to divide the territory from Bahawalpur to Lahore equally between themselves. A treaty was signed and Pakpattan, 208 kms from Lahore and 221 kms from Bahawalpur was agreed to form the boundary between them.

At Amritsar

In December, 1766, Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the eighth time. The Sikhs constantly harassed him by guerilla attacks. On January 15, 1767, Ahmad Shah wrote letters to Jhanda Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Khushhal Singh Singhpuria. He invited them to meet him and settle terms or meet him in the field. The Sikhs rejected the offer and continued their attacks. He retired from the

[1]Khushwaqt Rae says Hari Singh had no son, and that Jhanda Singh of village Panjwar in the parganah of Haibatpur was his colleague.

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Panjab in May, 1767. Jhanda Singh stayed at Amritsar and completed the fort begun by Hari Singh. He laid out a garden there, and erected another Katra called after his name.

Kasur, 1771

Some Brahmans of Kasur came to Amritsar and complained against sexual violence and ill-treatment of Hindus by the Pathans of Kasur. They further reported that cows[1] were publicly slaughtered in various parts of the town. They appealed for redress of these grievances. The military post established by Hari Singh in Kot Khwajah Husain at Kasur had been expelled. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jhanda Singh Bhangi and Ganda Singh immediately decided to attack the town and punish the offenders. Leaving Amritsar they halted at Taran Taran. Khem Karan was the next stage, where they spent two days. There they were joined by other Sikhs in large numbers. They were attracted by the possibility of acquiring a large booty.

Then they dashed upon Kasur. Hamid Khan and Usman Khan, the two chief leaders of the Afghans, came out to fight. In spite of the stubborn resistance on the part of the defenders, the Sikhs managed to force their way into the town. A hand-to-hand fight continued in the streets. The invaders destroyed Garhi Adur Rahim Khan, and a lot of booty fell into their hands. Hard fighting went on in other forts[2] for a couple of days. The Afghan chiefs ultimately found resistance useless, and sued for peace. They promised not to kill cows, not to maltreat their Hindu subjects, and to pay tribute in addition to a fine of four lakhs of rupees. These terms were accepted by the Sikh chiefs. The military post in Kot Khwajah Husain was re-established. They granted robes of honour to the Afghan rulers and retired from Kasur.

Subjugation of minor chieftains

While returning the Sikh chiefs halted at Nauri on the banks of

[1] "The cow being considered the most sacred animal of this world by the followers of Govind." Latif, *Panjab*, 291.

[2] There were twelve forts, all situated close to one another. Their names were : Kot Abdul Ghani Khan, Kot Azam Khan, Kot Badr-ud-din Khan, Kot Bakar-ud-din Khan, Kot Fatahdin Khan, Kot Ghulam Muhayu-ud-din Khan, Kot Hakim Khan, Kot Khwajah Husain Khan, Kot Murad Khan, Piran Ka Kot, Qila Pukhta and Kot Usman Khan.

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the Ravi. Afterwards they reached Saurian, 25 kms north of Amritsar. There Ahmad Khan and Umar Khan Pathans submitted to them and offered money and horses as a nazar. Next halt was made at Jastarwal. The Musalmans of this place presented to them a horse and Rs. 2,000 as a tribute. Farther on the Rajputs of Chamyari paid Rs. 5,000 and gave a few horses. Passing through Ramdas, 43 kms north of Amritsar, they came to Pakho Thather, the stronghold of the Randhawas, who found their safety in submission.

Good diplomacy

Jhanda Singh tried to cultivate friendly relations with the British Government. The nearest political outpost of the British at that time was at Lucknow. On August 19, 1771, Jhanda Singh wrote a letter to General Barker. He told him that the Sikhs had prevented Ahmad Shah Durrani from crossing the river Indus, and forced him to return to Kandhar. He said that the Sikhs maintained good relations with Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu. It is remarkable to note that of all the Sikh chiefs Jhanda Singh alone tried to cultivate friendly relations with the British Government.

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Majha Singh's expedition towards Bahawalpur, 1771

In 1771 Jhanda Singh again directed his attention towards Bahawalpur. He despatched Majha Singh, one of his commanders, to attack that place. He pillaged Khai, Sadullahpur, and the neighbouring places subject to Bahawalpur. The Nawab of Bahawalpur sent his nephew and heir apparent Jafar Khan at the head of a select force to check the progress of Majha Singh on the other side of river Satluj. Jafar Khan engaged the Sikhs in a fierce fight in which several officers of the Nawab were killed. They might have lost the day had they not been reinforced in time by a fresh contingent from Bahawalpur. Majha Singh was struck by a bullet, and he died instantly. His soldiers did not lose heart and got prepared to fight again. Gian Singh states that the Nawab of Bahawalpur purchased peace by paying one lakh of rupees. They now advanced upon Multan.

Multan, 1772

During Ahmad Shah's time Shuja Khan was the governor of Multan and Dharam Das was the treasurer. He was also a merchant and had good influence at Kandhar and Kabul. Timur Shah appointed Haji Sharif Khan governor of Multan in April, 1772. Shuja Khan

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retired to his newly built town of Shujabad. The Haji gave charge of accounts and treasury to another person. Unluckily for Haji Sharif Khan the rainy season went completely dry. The Kharif crops totally failed and no sowing was done in October-November for Rabi crops. It led to the following proverb :

Haji Sharif, na Rabi, na Kharif.

[During Haji Sharif's governership both the summer and winter crops failed.]

Further, the Haji was an indolent man, and the situation of law and order deteriorated. Besides Shuja Khan, Dharam Das and Jafar Khan, Nawab of Bahawalpur, carried on intrigues against the new governor. The Haji's wrath fell upon Dharam Das. First he got his son-in-law murdered. Dharam Das used to visit his friend Diwan Mansa Ram. In the evenings they strolled on the roof. Somebody aimed at Dharam Das from the top of a neighbouring house and shot him dead. No revenues were remitted to Kabul. Daily reports of disturbances were reaching Timur Shah. Sharif Beg Taklu was appointed the new governor of Multan. A small contingent of Afghan troops accompanied him for putting him in office. Haji Sharif Khan retired to Derajat, and Sharif Beg Taklu succeeded him.

Shuja Khan wanted to recover his lost position. Jafar Khan, the Nawab of Bahawalpur, was his supporter. The forces of both these chiefs besieged Multan. In this exigency Sharif Beg invited help from Bhangi sardars, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh. Another account says that the governor promised to the Sikh chiefs "to deliver up to them the fort of Multan."[1] The siege had gone on for eighteen days, when the Bhangi sardars arrived at Multan. The Bahawalpur force was defeated and dispersed. Muzaffar Khan, son of Shuja Khan, fled away. The city was occupied by the Sikhs. The Sikhs desired to see the temple of Prahladji situated inside the fort. The governor allowed them to come into the fort in batches of fifty men each. For some time the arrangement went on well and peacefully. Sharif Beg Taklu was applying *mahndi* to his beard in the upper storey, when he heard a great noise below. He sent four officers one by one to enquire into the matter. None returned. The governor was alarmed. On knowing that the entire Sikh army had entered the fort, he tried to flee. The Sikh chiefs allowed him to retire with his family and property in safety to Talamba. From there he went to Khairpur

[1] *JASB*, XII, part II, 565.

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Tanwin where he died some time afterwards. The fort and the province of Multan fell into the hands of Bhangi Sikhs on December 25, 1772.

Jhanda Singh appointed his step-brother, Diwan Singh Chachowalia, governor of Multan, Jamait Singh finance minister, and Lahna Singh military commander. In order to avoid a combination between the Nawab of Bahawalpur and Shuja Khan, Jhanda Singh leased the territories of Dipalpur, Kahror and Fatahpur lying between the Ravi and the Satluj to Madad Ali Khan, a noble of Bahawalpur.

Diwan Singh tried to subdue Shuja Khan. He laid siege to Shujabad for three months, but failed to take it. Shuja Khan died in 1776, and was succeeded by his son Muzaffar Khan. Diwan Singh attempted to take advantage of the situation. He attacked Shujabad again. He met with a strong resistance and returned to Multan unsuccessful. The Sikh forces, however, ransacked the whole district of Shujabad.

After some time Diwan Singh attacked Shujabad for the third time. Leaving the defences of his capital in the hands of his able lieutenants, Muzaffar Khan managed to slip to Bahawalpur for reinforcements. The Nawab lent him a strong force. On its approach Diwan Singh raised the siege. The troops of Muzaffar Khan and Bahawalpur pursued him and besieged Multan. On the twenty-third day of the siege a Hindu widow named Raju opened the Gardezi gate on the west side of the town. The Sikh soldiers retired to the fort. The Muslim troops thoroughly plundered the inhabitants of the city. Just then arrived Ganda Singh from Amritsar. In a bloody fight that ensued Muzaffar Khan and the Nawab were repulsed. They retired to Shujabad fighting. The Sikh forces gave up their pursuit. Nawab Bahawal Khan went to Bahawalpur. Muzaffar Khan stayed at Shujabad. Diwan Singh bravely held his own in the teeth of opposition from the Muslims who formed the vast majority of the population and Muzaffar Khan and the Nawab of Bahawalpur.

Muzaffar Khan continued to send regular reports against the Sikhs of Multan, and went on fomenting rebellion against their rule. Timur Shah despatched one-eyed Baharu Khan, a commander of great military experience, to expel the Sikhs from Multan. He arrived in the Panjab in 1778 and laid siege to the city of Multan. Shortly afterwards came the news that Timur Shah was engaged in a deadly strife with the ruler of Turan whose forces had entered Khorasan. A little later he received royal orders to join him. Baharu Khan raised

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the siege and retreated to Afghanistan.

Diwan Singh admirably stuck to his post at Multan from December 25, 1772 to February 18, 1780, when Multan was reconquered by Timur Shah, the details of which are given in Part III of this book. The Bhangis continued attempts to regain Multan. Sahib Khan Sayal as well as Karam Singh Bhangi attacked it, but their efforts were foiled.

In 1790 Muhammad Khan Bahadur-Khail was appointed governor and Muzaffar Khan was summoned to Kabul probably due to his failure in remitting annual tribute. Muzaffar Khan remained there for two years. Shah Zaman on his accession in 1793 confirmed Muzaffar Khan as a permanent governor of Multan. In 1797 when Shah Zaman invaded Panjab, Muzaffar Khan expelled the Sikhs from Kot Kamalia and restored Saadat Yar Khan Kharal to his hereditary position as chief of the place.

The Durrani rule over Multan province was confined to the territory from Sarae Sidhu to the southern border of tahsil Shujabad. Its total income was 5½ lakhs a year. The Nawab maintained a force of 2,000 men with twenty pieces of cannon. In an emergency reinforcement of 12,000 men could be raised.

The remaining half of tahsil Shujabad, tahsil Lodhran and tahsil Mailsi were under Bahawalpur. This region was well cultivated and was prosperous. The area under the Durranis suffered from maladministration and was poor.

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Western Panjab

After the capture of Multan in December, 1772, Ganda Singh returned via Bahawalpur, from where he extracted a tribute of one lakh of rupees. Jhanda Singh turned to the west Panjab. He first captured Talamba, situated near the southern bank of river Ravi. Its fort was 1,000 feet square. The outer wall was 200 feet thick and 20 feet high. There was an inner wall. Between these two walls there was a ditch 100 feet wide. The inner fort was 400 feet square. Its walls were 40 feet high. In the centre of this fort there was a tower 70 feet high. It commanded a large view over the neighbourhood. He subdued the Baluch chiefs of Jhang district. They were the most powerful tribe along the course of river Chenab. Proceeding farther north Jhanda Singh laid under contribution Mankerah. The Nawab of Ahmadabad situated to the west of river Jehlam opposite Bhera[1]

[1]Babar considered Bhera so important that he defined the extent of his empire from Bhera to Bihar.

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submitted and paid a tribute of twenty thousand rupees. Both these places were assigned to Man Singh. He took possession of a tract of country lying between the Salt Range and the Chenab as far as Sahiwal and Shahpur. *The Mianwali District Gazetteer* states that "local tradition is against Mankerah having been occupied by the Sikhs before its final capture by Ranjit Singh." It seems probable that Jhanda Singh made the chief of Mankerah his tributary, leaving him otherwise intact. Jhanda Singh then crossed the Indus at Kalabagh which he seized, and ravaged some portions of Derah Ismail Khan district. On his way back he captured Pindi Bhattian and Dhara.

Jhanda Singh attacked the stronghold of Chatha Pathans at Rasulnagar later known as Ramnagar, situated on the Sialkot-Multan road, 33 kms below Wazirabad on the banks of river Chenab. He seized the Zamzama gun and carried it to Amritsar. It came to be known as Bhangianwali Top.

The same year, 1773, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh led an expedition against Sialkot, and seized almost the whole district from the Pathans. They went to Jammu. Ranjit Dev accepted their suzerainty and quietly paid the arrears of tribute.

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Jammu

Hutchison and Vogel are of the view that Jammu was made tributary to the Sikhs by Bhuma Singh Bhangi in 1761. This may be true. They further declare that Hari Singh Bhangi plundered Jammu in 1762. It could be feasible. It is certain that Jammu was under the suzerainty of Jhanda Singh. Ranjit Dev was the ruler of Jammu for about half a century. By his docile nature, humility and simplicity he had pleased Jhanda Singh, who was satisfied with a small amount of tribute. According to George Forster who visited Jammu in 1783, Ranjit Dev paid only a few thousand rupees. Gian Singh says he paid one lakh of rupees. *The Sialkot District Gazetteer* puts this sum at one lakh and a quarter. Khushwaqt Rae states he paid two and a half lakhs.

In 1774 a serious quarrel arose between Ranjit Dev of Jammu and his eldest son Brij Raj Dev. The heir apparent was of dissolute character. The father, a man of great ability and sound judgment wanted his younger son Dalel Singh to succeed him. The dispute developed into a war. The raw youth not realizing the consequence sought assistance from Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh

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Kanhiya, both of whom readily assented. Ranjit Dev could not fight against this formidable coalition single-handed. He invited his overlord Jhanda Singh Bhangi to help him.

The united forces of the Sukarchakia and Kanhiya chiefs marched into the hills, and encamped on the banks of the Basantar river near the borders of Sialkot district and Jammu. Ranjit Dev collected an army of his own as well as of his feudatories, such as Basohli, Chamba and Nurpur, and placed them under Jhanda Singh who commanded his own force also. Both the parties began fighting at Udhochak, which lasted for twenty-three days. On the twenty-third day Charat Singh was killed in his own camp by the bursting of his gun which struck him in the forehead.

Jai Singh Kanhiya was stunned at this loss. He immediately placed Charat Singh's only son on the gaddi under his own guardianship. Jai Singh Kanhiya could not fight alone against formidable Jhanda Singh. The daring young men of the Bhangi or sweeper caste claimed affinity with Bhangi sardars on account of their name. The Bhangi sardars welcomed them and gave them posts of great trust and responsibility. One of them was Jhanda Singh's constant companion and bodyguard. Jai Singh Kanhiya won over him and paid the Rangretta Sikh a sum of Rs. 4,000 as the price for murdering his master. One day after nightfall Jhanda Singh accompanied by the Mazhabi Sikh was going to the camp of a Bhangi sardar. On the way in the dark he was shot dead from behind, and the assassin took shelter in the Kanhiya camp.

Jhanda Singh's younger brother Ganda Singh was present in the camp. Jhanda Singh's death broke his heart. He did not like to continue the fight and retired from Jammu. Ranjit Dev realized the supremacy of Jai Singh. He patched up peace with his son as well as with Jai Singh Kanhiya by paying him a sum of one lakh and a quarter rupees.

Ganda Singh

On the death of Jhanda Singh, his younger brother Ganda Singh succeeded to the headship of the Bhangi misl. Earlier he had participated in all the activities with Jhanda Singh. He was brave and as daring as his elder brother and father. He had taken active part in the campaigns of Bahawalpur, Multan, Central Panjab and Western Panjab.

The murder of Jhanda Singh was rankling in the mind of Ganda

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Singh. He was waiting for an opportunity which soon presented itself to him. Pathankot[1] had been seized by Jhanda Singh from Fatah Muhammad Khan, and was given to Nodh Singh[2], a chief of the Bhangi Misl. He died shortly after the Jammu affair, leaving behind a widow named Jaunsān and a daughter. According to the custom among the Sikhs, the widow was to be taken to wife by a brother of the deceased or some other near relative through a ceremony called *Karewah*, or *chadar dālnā*. This practice was followed to prevent the lands from going to another confederacy or to an enemy. Nodh Singh's widow offered her daughter[3] and the estate to Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanhiya a deadly foe of the Bhangis. The proposal was declined for fear of a war with the Bhangis. But Jai Singh suggested her to contact Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya of Kalanaur. Haqiqat Singh accepted the offer in favour of his brother Tara Singh. Tara Singh proved very unscrupulous. He came to Pathankot, married the girl and received the district of Pathankot in dowry. He felt afraid that his mother-in-law might change her mind with regard to Pathankot under pressure of Bhangi sardars. So he murdered both the women, and became the sole owner of the estate.

This greatly incensed Ganda Singh as it added an insult to an injury. He demanded restitution of Pathankot which was refused. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who was not on good terms with Jai Singh Kanhiya excited Ganda Singh to fight the Kanhiyas. Thereupon Ganda Singh, Gujar Singh, Lahna Singh, Bhag Singh Chamyari, Pir Muhammad Khan Chatha, Ranjit Dev of Jummu and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, all advanced against the united forces of Kanhiyas, Sukarchakias and Ahluwalias. Ganda Singh carried Zamzama gun with him.

The two armies met at Sundar Chak near village Awanak in parganah Dinanagar, 25 kms south of Pathankot, and fought for many days.[4] After ten days' continuous struggle heavy rains began

[1]The fortress of Pathankot was built by Shah Jahan when he led an expedition against Nurpur.

[2]Gian Singh calls him Mansa Singh.

[3]Gian Singh says that his widow married Tara Singh Kanhiya, and she gave possession of her territory and property to him. Kanhiya Lal agrees with him. But the evidence of Ahmad Shah Batalvi is conclusive on this point.

Jassa Singh Binod agrees with Batalvi. Nawazish Ali, p. 780 states that his name was Nand Singh and he was also known by the name of Mansa Singh.

[4]The author of *Jassa Singh Binod* gives details of the fights in which Kanwar Mohar Singh Ahluwalia greatly distinguished himself. Gian Singh says the battle lasted for fourteen days.

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which lasted without any break for one month and a half. During this period a calamity fell upon the Bhangis. Ganda Singh was taken seriously ill and died there. Gian Singh says he was killed by an arrow of Haqiqat Singh.

Charat Singh and Desu Singh

Ganda Singh's son Desu Singh was a minor. His step-brother Charat Singh assumed the command of Bhangi forces, and continued fighting. As ill luck would have it, the new chief also lost his life in one of the engagements. The other brother Diwan Singh was at Multan. So Ganda Singh's son Desu Singh was raised to the leadership of the misl. He was a coward and dull witted. He retired from the battle-field and came to Amritsar. He could not manage the affairs of the misl successfully. The veteran Bhangi sardars could not be controlled by him. They assumed independence and stopped paying any tribute to the figure-head of the misl. His greatest enemy was Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. Both were often engaged in mutual warfare. Many of his parganahs were seized by Mahan Singh. Desu Singh was killed in 1782 in an engagement with Mahan Singh at Chiniot. Mahan Singh expelled the Bhangi military posts from Pindi Bhattian, Sahiwal, Isakhel, Musakhel and Jhang. He had ruled for eight years.[1]

Gulab Singh

Desu Singh was succeeded by his minor son Gulab Singh. During his minority his cousin Karam Singh Dulu carried on administration. He was a bold and brave sardar. He fought a number of engagements with Mahan Singh Sukarchakia and got back his old parganahs. Gulab Singh managed well. He added several buildings and gardens to beautify Amritsar. He defeated the Pathan chiefs of Kasur Nizam-ud-din and Qutab-ud-din and made them his tributaries.

Gulab Singh possessed a body of 600 cavalry. In an emergency he could raise a force of 4,000 cavalry and 2,000 infantry. Another writer estimated his military strength in 1898 at the time of Shah Zaman's last invasion at 6,000. He had four pieces of cannon and six wall pieces. His territory yielded him about ten lakhs of rupees as annual revenue.

Shah Zaman's third invasion took place in 1796-97. He crossed the

[1]Nawazish Ali says that Gujar Singh Bhangi served Desu Singh as his chief minister for eight years.

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Indus on 6 December, 1796. The news sent a thrill of horror throughout the Panjab. Most of the people all along the road took to flight. Ranjit Singh and Dal Singh sent their families to hills. Sahib Singh put up the members of his household first at Islamnagar and then in the hills. Lahna Singh, the chief of Lahore, permitted the inhabitants to flee to any place of safety.

The residents of Amritsar were also taking to flight. After some time they were forbidden by Gulab Singh, the chief of the place. On 12 December, 1796, he ordered Diwan Niranjan Das to instruct Gulab Singh Thanadar living in Katra Sardar Singh not to allow anybody to leave the city until the arrival of messengers from Peshawar. Mahan Singh was sent to make the same announcement in Guru Ka Bazar and other streets.

Shaikh Rahim Ali, the English intelligencer, wrote on 18 December, 1796, that Raja Gulab Singh was sitting on the *Thara* (platform) of the Diwan Khana. Mahan Singh represented to him that the bankers and shroffs of the city were under great alarm, and desired permission to go to some place of security. The Raja answered that if the inhabitants were to quit the city not a lamp would be left burning. Subsequently the Mahajans of the bazars entreated that the Raja would permit them to depart while their ears and noses were safe. He ordered a proclamation to be made in the city desiring the people to remain without fear, that whenever his family should quit it, the inhabitants also would be escorted by a party of horse to any place they desired.

Shortly after on hearing of the Shah's further advance he permitted the inhabitants to leave. They instantly packed their goods and spent the whole night in loading their effects upon carts. Before day-break they fled in consternation towards Kangra and Hoshiarpur. About 500 persons who were greatly devoted to Gulab Singh came to take leave of him in deep grief. The Raja "with tears in his eyes, at half pahar of the day (9 a.m.), mounted his horse, and with a body of two or three hundred horse and foot went for the purpose of escorting the inhabitants to the Jandiala river (Beas), which is seven kos (43 kms) from the city. From that place, he detached the horse to Hoshiarpur and returned to the fort."

In the Sirhali area two tribes of Nepalis and Dugars were extremely rebellious and uncontrollable. The Bhangi sardars had built a fort one km away from the town to keep these tribes under subjection. Once Gulab Singh while on a tour there was attacked and his camp was

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plundered. Gulab Singh's three parganahs of Taran Taran, Sobraon and Sirhali were seized by Baghel Singh, which he could not recover. On Baghel Singh's death in 1805 these three parganahs were seized by Ranjit Singh. Many other territories of Gulab Singh were taken possession of by his subordinate chiefs. Gulab Singh was left with only six parganahs of Amritsar, Chubhal, Kohāli, Majithā, Naushahrā, and a part of Sirhali. About this time Ranjit Singh Sukarchakia was rising to prominence. In revenge for the death of his father Desu Singh, Gulab Singh formed a plan to kill Ranjit Singh. He entered into a conspiracy with Nizam-ud-din of Kasur, Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. They invited Ranjit Singh to join them in a feast of merry-making at Bhasin situated between Lahore and Amritsar. Ranjit Singh came at the head of a strong force. A few skirmishes were fought between the allies and Ranjit Singh. Then all the chiefs agreed to revel in excess of every kind. Two months were spent in unrestrained carousal and dissipation. Gulab Singh completely lost himself in hard drinking and debauchery of which he died in the jungles of Bhasin in 1800. Ranjit Singh returned safely to Lahore.

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Gurdit Singh

Gulab Singh was survived by his widow, Mai Sukhan and a ten-year-old son Gurdit Singh. He had been married at this early age twice. One wife was the daughter of Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat and the other was the daughter of Fatah Singh Kanhiya. The affairs of the Misl were managed by Mai Sukhan. Ranjit Singh had an excellent opportunity to destroy the power of the rival misl root and branch and seize the religious capital of the Sikhs without whose possession he could not claim supremacy among his co-religionists. Amritsar was larger than Lahore, writes Hugel. It was also the richest city in the Panjab. Big merchants and wealthy bankers had settled there. The following chiefs had built *bungahs* or hospices on all sides of the Durbar Sahib. Ahluwalia Misl, Jassa Singh and Bhag Singh; Bhangi Misl, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Desu Singh, Charat Singh, Diwan Singh, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Lahna Singh and Gujar Singh; Faizullahpuria Misl, Kapur Singh, Khushhal Singh; Karorasinghia Misl, Baghel Singh Chubhalia; Ramgarhia Misl, Jassa Singh.

As a pretext he demanded from Sukhan in 1802 the Zamzama Gun which originally was taken from Lahore in 1765 by his grand-father

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Charat Singh. Sukhan rejected the demand. Ranjit Singh along with his friend Fatah Singh Ahluwalia attacked Amritsar. The Bhangi fort fell after a brief resistance lasting for five hours. Gurdit Singh and his mother Sukhan fled to the Ramgarhia fort for shelter situated 1½ kms away from Qila Bhangian at Amritsar. Ranjit Singh annexed Amritsar and seized all the territories and their entire property. Gurdit Singh in despair and desperation drowned his cares in wine.

Ranjit Singh's aunt, sister of Mahan Singh and wife of Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat, was found in Qila Bhangian at Amritsar. She was put in a rath and sent to live with Sukhan.

The Maharaja granted Gurdit Singh a pension of Rs. 500 annually. He died in his ancestral village Panjwar in Taran Taran parganah in 1827. His sons, blind Ajit Singh and Mul Singh possessed revenue free land of five wells.

The last Bhangi sardar seen by Hugel in 1836, was Bir Singh. He was living in Katawar village about 30 kms away from Pathankot on the way to Nurpur. He led a life of poverty, and his main occupation was to look after a lovely garden, called Sri ka Ghar.

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Diwan Singh Chachowalia

Diwan Singh was one of five sons of Hari Singh Bhangi. In 1772 he was appointed governor of Multan by Jhanda Singh with Lahna Singh as commander of troops. Diwan Singh had to face three great enemies in Shuja Khan, Nawab of Bahawalpur and Haji Sharif Khan. Besides there was always the danger from Kabul. Further, it was a hard task to keep the Muslim population, about 95 per cent of the total, in control. He remarkably held his position in the midst of all these hostile factors. Several forces came from Kabul to oust him. He was eventually defeated by Timur Shah Durrani himself in 1780. The King was so highly impressed with Diwan Singh's bravery that he allowed him to depart unmolested with all the movable property he could carry.

Zamzama Gun or Bhangianwali Top

Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the fifth time in the winter of 1759. His main object was to destroy the power of the Marathas. At Lahore he ordered a huge gun to be prepared to face the artillery of the Marathas. It was cast at Lahore by Shah Nazir under the directions of Shah Vali Khan, the prime minister of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The material, a mixture of copper and brass, was obtained

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from the Hindus of the city, one vessel being taken from each house. The gun was not ready till 14 January, 1761, when the third battle of Panipat was fought. On Ahmad Shah Durrani's return to Kandhar Khwajah Abed, the governor of Lahore, kept it in the Shah Burj of the Lahore fort.

In 1765 when Lahore was taken by the Sikhs, the gun fell to the share of Charat Singh Sukarchakia. He carried it to Gujranwala. During Charat Singh's absence at the time of Ahmad Shah's eighth invasion in 1766-67, Ahmad Khan Chatha took it to his new fort of Ahmadnagar in a raid. His elder brother Pir Muhammad claimed it as a right for being the senior member of the family. A battle was fought between the two brothers, in which one son of Pir Muhammad and two sons of Ahmad Khan lost their lives. Pir Muhammad sought help from Gujar Singh Bhangi. He took Ahmad Khan prisoner and kept him without water and food for a day and night. Ahmad Khan surrendered the gun. Gujar Singh carried it to Gujrat. It lay there for two years. Charat Singh claimed it as his property. As Gujar Singh and Charat Singh were on amicable terms, Gujar Singh gave it up to Charat Singh who sent it to Gujranwala. In the beginning of 1772 the gun was again seized by the Chathas. For some time they kept it in the fort of Manchar, and then shifted it to Rasulnagar later renamed Ramnagar.

In 1773, Jhanda Singh while returning from Multan took possession of it and brought it to Amritsar. Ganda Singh used it in the battle of Pathankot in 1774. In 1802 Ranjit Singh seized it. It was used by him in five campaigns at Daska, Kasur, Sujanpur, Wazirabad and Multan. At the last place its barrel was injured, and it became unfit for service. From 1818 to 1860 it lay at the Delhi Gate at Lahore as a showpiece. In February, 1860, it was placed in front of the Central Museum where it now stands.

The Zamzamah required a ball of forty kilograms in weight. "It came to be regarded as a talisman of supremacy among the Sikhs." The inscription on the gun is as follows :

"By order of the Emperor Dur-e-Duran, Shah Vali Khan, the Wazir, made this gun named Zamzamah, the taker of strongholds.

In the reign of the Emperor possessing dignity like Feridun,
Dispenser of Justice, robed in Equity-
His present Majesty Ahmad Shah Dur-e-Duran,
A Prince occupying a throne mighty as Jamshid's.
There was issued unto the Chief Wazir,

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From the threshold of His Highness,
An order to have cast, with every possible skill
A gun terrible as a dragon and huge as a mountain,
To his heaven-enthroned Majesty's devoted servant,
Shah Vali Khan Wazir.
So in order to effect this great achievement,
The Master-workman called up his endeavours,
Till with consummate toil was cast
This wondrous gun Zamzamah,
A destroyer even of the strongholds of heaven,
Under the auspices of His Majesty.
I enquired of Reason for the date of this gun,
Reason angrily replied,
'If thou wilt give thy life in payment,
I will repeat to thee the date',
I did so, and he replied, ———'What a gun is this ?
The form of a fire-raining dragon."

The last line "Paikar-e-azdhāe ātish bār" gives the chronogram of the date of the gun—1174 AH, or 1761 AD, each letter having a numerical value according to the Abjad system.

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Prominent Bhangi Chieftains

1. *Godh Singh Kamla* : Hari Singh Bhangi possessed a small fort near Sialkot. Godh Singh and his brother Uttam Singh were in charge of that fort. Their horses were tied outside the fort. All of a sudden Godh Singh observed that a huge cloud of dust was advancing from Jammu side. Fearing an attack he closed the gates of the fort and got ready to fight. Thinking that the horses would fall into enemy hands, he quickly cut off the ropes with which their front and hind legs were tied. The horses ran helter-skelter. The enemy expecting an attack fled back to Jammu. It was a force of 300 irregulars of Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu who was trying to occupy the Sialkot district. Hari Singh called Godh Singh "Kamla" or foolish and he came to be known by this epithet. Godh Singh and his brother often fought in Bhangi army against Ranjit Dev, Sansar Chand Katoch and Sukarchakias.

2. *Gujar Singh of Lahore* was the son of Natha Singh, a poor cultivator Sandhu Jat of village Bhuri Asal also called Borahsal situated near Khem Karan on the western border of district Firozpur. Natha Singh had four sons, Gujar Singh, Garja Singh, Nusbaha Singh, and Chait Singh. As young men still in their teens they were tempted to become Sikhs. They went to their maternal grandfather Gurbakhsh Singh Bhangi of village Roranwala, 2 kms from Atari, took pahul from him and became Singhs. All the brothers were strong and wellbuilt. Gurbakhsh Singh gave each of them a horse and recruited them in his band. Whatever booty they acquired, half of it was given to Gurbakhsh Singh, and the other half was retained for themselves. Gujar Singh was the cleverest of all the brothers. Gurbakhsh Singh was growing old and weak. He made Gujar Singh head of his band. Gujar Singh captured Amargarh and began to reside there. He united his band to the army of Hari Singh Bhangi, head of the Bhangi misl.

Gurbakhsh Singh had a daughter and no son. He adopted Lahna Singh as a son. On Gurbakhsh Singh's death Gujar Singh claimed the whole estate and property of the deceased. Lahna Singh offered him half of it. A drawn battle was fought between them. As both of

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them were of the same age, and both were equally brave, they became fast friends.

Occupation of Lahore, 1765

On the occasion of Baisakhi at Amritsar, both Lahna Singh and Gujar Singh planned the occupation of Lahore. At the head of 1,000 horsemen each, they reached Lahore in a dark night. Gujar Singh was the first to enter the fort through a drain of dirty water. They occupied Lahore jointly. As Lahna Singh was senior in relationship, being his maternal uncle, Gujar Singh allowed Lahna Singh to take possession of the city and the fort. Gujar Singh remained satisfied with the uninhabited eastern part of the city lying outside its walls. It was a jungle and the meeting place of thieves and robbers. Gujar Singh erected an unwalled fort there known as Qila Gujar Singh. Though the fort no longer exists there, the area still bears his name. The main railway station of Lahore stands on the site of his fort. Then came Sobha Singh. He seized Niaz Beg village, and became the third ruler of Lahore.

Gujar Singh invited people to live there. He sank forty wells to supply water. He established about a dozen brick kilns, and constructed 15 shops and 150 houses. Of these 20 were allotted to flower gatherers, 4 to grocers, 2 to general merchants, one each to a blacksmith, a carpenter and a barber, 8 to leather dressers and the remaining 128 to cultivators. A mosque was built for the Muslims, though no gurdwara or temple was erected.

To the North-West

Gujar Singh was not content with the occupation of this jungle land and by being a partner. He desired for new and independent lands. He appointed his eldest son Sukha Singh at Lahore and himself marched to the north-west at the head of a strong force. He seized Eminabad, 56 kms from Lahore. Fifteen kilometres farther was Gujranwala which was the headquarters of Charat Singh Sukarckakia. Gujar Singh did not touch Charat Singh's territory. Charat Singh also did not like to quarrel with such a powerful chief supported by Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh. So both came to an understanding. It was agreed that they would work individually or jointly according to circumstances. They were to seize lands turn by turn in order to avoid any mutual conflict.

Beyond Gujranwala the important town was Wazirabad, 32 kms

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away. Gujar Singh assigned it to Gurbakhsh Singh Waraich of Chubhal village near Amritsar. Later on Sahib Singh Bhangi entrusted it to his own son-in-law, Jodh Singh of Pasrur. Gujar Singh seized Chakrali and Sodhra on the southern bank of river Chenab. The parganah of Sodhra contained Begowala, Bhopalwala, Kayanwala, Mitranwali and Sahowala. In all he captured 150 villages in Gujranwala district.

Conquest of Gujrat, 1765

On the other side of river Chenab, 8 kms distant from the river and 114 kms from Lahore lay the town of Gujrat. It was an old city. It stood like a gem in the green woods of the region. It was a fertile place, though slightly cultivated. A fort built by Akbar was situated in the heart of the town, which was surrounded by mud walls. It had about eight thousand houses. Population mainly consisted of Muslim Gujars and Hindu Khatris. The place was famous for manufacturing of daggers, swords, matchlocks and other arms. The main road to Kashmir started from there.

Gujrat was under Sultan Muqarrab Khan Gakhar. The Gakhars were a most powerful tribe. They had possessed great power for many hundred years. They dominated over a wide extent of country lying between Chenab and Indus rivers. They were a united people. It was their organisation that had enabled them to subdue other warlike Muslim tribes such as Awans, Chibs, Gujars, Janjuas, Khatars, Khokhars, and others. On account of their superiority all the Gakhars, high and low, were addressed as Raja.

Sultan Muqarrab Khan became the head of the Gakhar tribe in 1739 at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion. He subdued Yusafzai Afghans of Hazara district. He defeated Jang Quli Khan Khatak. He seized Gujrat and established his headquarters there in 1758 after the death of Adina Beg Khan. He overran the Chib territory up to Bhimbar in the north. He supported Ahmad Shah Durrani in his Indian invasions, and gave away his daughter in marriage to him, and received great consideration from him.

Gujar Singh decided to capture Gujrat. Charat Singh agreed to support him. The two sardars marched upon Gujrat in December, 1765. Muqarrab Khan offered tough opposition first on western bank of river Chenab, and then outside the walls of the town. Having been defeated he shut himself up in the fort. The town was immediately besieged. In a few days supply of foodstuff ran short both in

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the town and the fort. The Gakhar chief decided to escape. In a dark night he made a sudden sally and cut his way through the besiegers. He was riding on an elephant. The Sikhs pursued him. Muqarrab Khan descended into the flooded stream flowing nearby. The elephant crossed it, but the chief was not on its back. The Sikhs thought he had been drowned. Riding a horse at the head of his womenfolk he dashed on. On the banks of river Jehlam, 50 kms away from Gujrat he was captured by his rival Gakhar chief Himmat Khan of Domeli, 30 kms to the west of river Jehlam, and was put to death. The two elder sons of Muqarrab Khan seized Perwala, and the two younger sons Wangli.

Ganesh Das Wadehra says that the Sikhs first plundered the entire camp of Muqarrab Khan. Afterwards they fell upon Gujrat. Whatever they found in the town was carried away. Houses and shops were reduced to ashes by fire. The people fled away to Jalalpur, Shadipur, Akhnur and other places far and near. The Waraich Jats who held 170 villages in Gujrat district and 41 villages in Gujranwala submitted quietly.

The Chaj Doab was divided between the two sardars. Gujar Singh's territory extended from river Jehlam to Wāso Sohawa.[1] Charat Singh's share was from Kunjah to Miani. The most important places belonging to Gujar Singh in the Chaj Doab were Gujrat, Jalalpur and Islamgarh.

Kashmir expedition, 1767

Rahmat Khan of Jalalpur Jattan had helped the Sikhs in the battle of Gujrat. He had built a strong fort at Islamgarh and had appointed Islam Khan, the chief of the fort. He voluntarily submitted to Gujar Singh. Gujar Singh gave charge of Gujrat to his son Sahib Singh, and himself turned towards the Chibs. In Gujrat district they held fifty-one villages. Besides they possessed the tract of Khari Kharyali stretching from the forts of Mangla and Naushahra on river Jehlam in the hilly region upto the Chenab. Like Gakhars, they enjoyed the title of Raja. Gujar Singh could not subdue them and he failed to take the fort of Mangla. But the Chibs undertook not to create disturbances. About the same time Gujar Singh reduced to subjection the Muslim hilly states of lower Kashmir region. He defeated Sulaiman

[1]Wāso Sohāwa was situated in Sialkot district near Zafarwal.

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Khan, chief of Bhimbar[1] and made him his tributary. Mirpur, Kotli and Punchh fell afterwards. These successes encouraged Gujar Singh to conquer the valley of Kashmir which was under the Durranis. He advanced one stage ahead of Punchh. Up to this time the Sikhs had experience of only low hills, three to four thousand feet high. They had a great fear of snow, storms and cold winds, as well as of the enemy attacks in narrow gorges. Further there was the danger from Ahmad Shah Durrani who would have come to the rescue of his Kashmir governors. The Sikh soldiers were half-hearted in this adventure, and they did not like to be entrapped in formidable mountains. In an encounter with the troops of the governor of Kashmir, the Sikhs were defeated and most of their baggage and many horses fell into enemy hands. Gujar Singh returned to Gujrat with great difficulty (*uftān wā khezān*).

Islam Khan, the zamindar of Islamgarh, came to sympathise with Gujar Singh. It was well-known that this chief being fond of horses had a large stable at Islamgarh. Gujar Singh planned to seize his stables by imprisoning him. (Az rāh-e-daghābāzi asīr kardanash tajwiz namūd.) Islam Khan came to know about this conspiracy. He took to flight leaving his horses and other things behind.

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During last Durrani invasion, 1766-67

During Ahmad Shah Durrani's eighth invasion, Gujar Singh with other Sikh sardars offered him a tough opposition. On January 17, 1767, the Durrani commander-in-chief, Jahan Khan, reached Amritsar at the head of 15,000 troops. Gujar Singh, Charat Singh, Lahna Singh and Hira Singh fought with him. An intelligencer reported that five to six thousand Afghans were killed and wounded. The Shah was halting at Jalalabad on the banks of river Beas. Leaving his baggage there he rushed to help Jahan Khan. The Sikhs carried off most of the Shah's goods.

Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu had sent his tribute to the Durrani

[1]Bhimbar is the name of a state, town and river. It lay on the royal Mughal road to Kashmir from Gujrat via Pir Panjal. Bhimbar was the starting point for the mountainous region. The state was ruled over by Rajas who had been converted to Islam, but retained their old Hindu title. There was a walled castle about 150 metres long and 75 metres wide. A sarae built of bricks and sandstones existed there.

Drew, 90; *Gujrat Gazetteer 1892-93*, 5-6; Hugel, 35, 74; Thornton, I, 401; Vigne, I, 238.

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king. On the retirement of the Shah, Gujar Singh and Jhanda Singh led an expedition to Jammu, and imposed a fine on the Raja.

In the summer of 1767 Gujar Singh and Charat Singh conquered Jehlam, 53 kms from Gujrat, and Rohtas, both of which went to Charat Singh. It was agreed that the whole region along the highway up to the Indus would belong to Gujar Singh. The western parts in the Chaj Doab and Sind Sagar Doab, with the exception of those places already under Bhangis would be in the sphere of Sukarchakias.

Rawalpindi, 1767

The country between rivers Jehlam and the Indus was full of ravines. It was an arid area. Between Rohtas and Rawalpindi, a distance of about 100 kms Jherar, Jagatpur, Perwala and Pakoke Sarae were the strongholds of Gakhars. The Gakhars were a hardy and numerous tribe of great valour. Sultan Mukarram Khan of Perwala,[1] Karmullah Khan of Dhani, and Mansur Khan of Gheb submitted to Gujar Singh. The districts of Dhani and Gheb were famous for a fine breed of horses and mules. It enabled Gujar Singh to equip his forces in a better way. Pothohar also fell to Gujar Singh. It consisted of two parganahs, Wangli and Perwala. Wangli contained eight tappas with its headquarter at Kalra town.

In addition to Gakhars there were other tribes such as Awans, Dhunds and Gulers. They were widely scattered over a large area. But their thickest population was in the districts of Jehlam and Rawalpindi. In Jehlam district they occupied the tract of Awan Kari lying across river Gabir. They occupied a strong position in Rawalpindi district. The Awan strongholds in Rawalpindi districts were at Chihan, Jand Bugdial and Sarwala. An Awan clan known as Guleras, notorious for marauding activities, lived to the north of Rawalpindi. The Dhund tribe, a lawless and refractory people, inhabited the hilly region to the north of Rawalpindi between Hazara and Murree. Their citadels were at Dewal, Kahuta and Murree. It was with such people that Gujar Singh had to deal with.

Rawalpindi was an insignificant place in those days. It contained a few huts of Rawal Hindu mendicants. Gujar Singh realized its strategic importance, being situated at the junction of two highways, from Kabul to Lahore and from Kabul to Kashmir. Gujar Singh along with his son Sahib Singh captured Rawalpindi in the winter of

[1]In Perwala the main crops were sugarcane and rice.

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1767. Gujar Singh gave charge of Rawalpindi to Milkha Singh Thepuria. Gujar Singh proceeded farther to Hasan Abdal, 46 kms from Rawalpindi, and entrusted it to Kala Singh Bhangi of the sweeper caste. He established his seat at Kali Sarae nearby. Gujar Singh went ahead to Attock 53 kms from Hasan Abdal, and assigned the area between Hasan Abdal and Attock to a Brahman named Ran Singh Pādā. His headquarters were also at Kali Sarae. Both the sardars had to work as a united team. Individually each was responsible for his own region, but jointly they were responsible for defence purposes. Milkha Singh's wife exercised supervision over them. Milkha Singh had control over the whole area lying between Rohtas and Attock. Milkha Singh appointed Sadhu Singh to take up the duty of providing rations for the Sikh troops. Budh Singh was to supervise the collection of revenues. In the absence of Milkha Singh his wife commanded Sikh forces to suppress local rebellions between Rawalpindi and Attock. Tappa Tarali and Qila Rotala were given to Chait Singh brother of Gujar Singh. Kalra and Pothohar were assigned to Jodh Singh Atariwala

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Attock

Between Rawalpindi and Attock there was Mārgalla Pass. It separated Kālāchitta and Khairimurat hills. At Attock there was not a single tree on the plain. It was as level as a sheet of water. The town was situated inside the fort. It lay on the spur of a hill sloping towards the river Indus. Hence its inside was visible from the western bank of the river. The mud fort of Khairabad situated on the other bank of the Indus opposite Attock commanded the full view of the fort of Attock. The western side of the fort was washed by the Indus. The fort was a triangle in shape, and its other two sides were surrounded by two ravines. Each side of the hill of Attock was about 3 kms long. There was no well inside the fort. Water was available from the Indus through a passage called *Abduzd*. The river washed the hills on two sides. The current of water in the Indus at Attock was about 80 metres wide, being the narrowest in the plains, and 20 metres deep. In 1800 the water rose to a depth of 23 metres.

Mushakhsa jagirs

The subjugation of the warlike tribes in the north-western Panjab was effected by Gujar Singh Bhangi in about twelve years. The Awans, Dalals, Gakhars, Ghebas, Guleras, Janjuas, Jodras, Khatars,

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Runials and Tarkhelis of the Jehlam and Rawalpindi districts and the Salt Range, all gave way before him. In this difficult task he was assisted by Charat Singh Sukarchakia. By 1770 the Gakhars were completely subdued. In the parganah of Fatahpur Baorah the Gakhars owned 669 villages. Out of these 192 villages were granted by Milkha Singh, deputy of Gujar Singh, in jagir to the most notable tribes. These estates called *Mushakhsa* were subject only to a trifling tribute. The remaining villages were kept under his own direct management and were known as *Khalsa*. These jagirs were distributed as follows:

Gakhars of Anjuri	2	villages
Gakhars of Chaneri and Mandala of the hills of Murree and Phulgiran	107	villages
Gakhars of Malakpur	1	villages
Gakhars of Rawalpindi	7	villages
Gakhars of Saivadpur	22	villages
Gakhars of Shaikhpur	3	villages
Goleras	22	villages
Janjuas of Dhanial	18	villages
Janjuas of Runial	6	villages
Pothials) Tumair Runials)	2	villages
Sayyids of Shalditta	2	villages
Total	192	villages

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The Jammu warfare, 1782

In 1782 Gujar Singh participated in the Jammu warfare. Raja Ranjit Dev had died in April, 1781. He was succeeded by his eldest son Brij Raj Dev. Karianwala in Sialkot district belonged to Jammu. It had been seized by Bhangis. Brij Raj Dev was anxious to recover it. By exchange of turbans he had established brotherly relations with Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. He invited help from Mahan Singh in getting back this territory. The Bhangis were assisted by Kanhiyas. Gujar Singh was among them. They besieged the Dinpur fort of Jammu. Fighting continued for some time. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was invited to intervene, and he brought about peace between them.

Last unhappy days

Gujar Singh had three sons. The eldest Sukha Singh was at Lahore.

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In 1779 he was married to the daughter of Bhag Singh Ahluwalia The Second son was Sahib Singh who lived at Gujrat. He was betrothed to Raj Kanwar daughter of Charat Singh Sukarchakia. On Charat Singh's death in 1774 the marriage was performed by Mahan Singh in 1775. His second marriage took place with the daughter of Raja Hamir Singh of Nabha in 1779. The youngest son Fatah Singh managed the ancestral estate at Rangarh, 30 kms from Amritsar towards Lahore. Of the three brothers Sahib Singh was the most ambitious and most selfish and had no filial and brotherly considerations.

During the lifetime of Charat Singh relations with Gujar Singh Bhangi remained amicable. He died in 1774, and was succeeded by his only son Mahan Singh. He was most ambitious and most unscrupulous. In diplomacy and intrigue he had no equal. He was the bitterest foe inwardly of Bhangis. He could not tolerate their territories intermingled with his own, and he wished to be the sole ruler west of the river Ravi. Besides he was jealous of the supremacy of Bhangis. Militarily he could not face the Bhangi misl in the field. So he resorted to diplomacy. He took advantage of his relationship with Sahib Singh, and instigated him to set himself up as an independent chief with his support against the authority of his father. Sahib Singh turned out to be a fool in the hands of his clever brother-in-law. He began to act independently against the instructions of Gujar Singh. Gujar Singh felt offended but he kept quiet. Mahan Singh then incited Sahib Singh to seize Lahore from his brother Sukha Singh. He persuaded Sahib Singh to believe that the ruler of Lahore was superior to the ruler of Gujrat. Sahib Singh led an expedition against Sukha Singh who lost his life in the battle. Gujar Singh was deeply grieved. He marched to Gujrat. After some fighting Sahib Singh fled to Islamgarh. Mahan Singh brought about peace between them. Sahib Singh was allowed to remain at Gujrat and serve under Gujar Singh.

After some time Mahan Singh attacked Rasulnagar. Ahmad Khan, the Chatha Pathan chief, fought bravely for some time. When provisions and munitions ran short, he escaped into Gujar Singh's camp. Mahan Singh demanded his surrender. The request was flatly rejected. Sahib Singh secretly made the Pathan chief over to Mahan Singh's men. He was conveyed to Gujranwala and was put to death. Gujar Singh was deeply shocked at this treachery. When he reprimanded Sahib Singh, he openly insulted and disgraced his father. In despair

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Gujar Singh retired to Lahore.

In grief and sorrow he died a broken-hearted man at Lahore. Khushwaqt Rae places his death in 1788. Latif and Ganesh Das Wadehra follow him. Cunningham puts it in 1791. In view of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia's siege of Sodhra, I place Gujar Singh's death early in 1790.

Gujar Singh was a good ruler. He maintained peace and order in the country and greatly encouraged agriculture and local trade and industry. He was a dashing soldier, and was the first sardar to establish Sikh supremacy at Rawalpindi and Bhimbar. He was the best friend of Charat Singh Sukarchakia, but fell a victim to the intrigues of Mahan Singh.

3. *Gurbakhsh Singh Dodia :* The village of Doda is situated in the Shakargarh tahsil of Sialkot district. Gurbakhsh Singh was the first in the family to become a Sikh. He joined the Bhangi Misl. He occupied a large territory in the neighbourhood of Doda including Bhopalwala Jassar, Ranjrur and Sadhanwal. He also captured some territory of Jammu. In order to protect it from Jammu rulers, he built a fort a few kilometres away from Jammu border. Gurbakhsh Singh and his son Sudh Singh were bitter enemies of Jammu. Once they had a very narrow escape from death. They were riding to Lala Chak, 8 kms from Jammu. Raja Ranjit Dev laid an ambush for them. The Jammu troops fired upon them. Gurbakhsh Singh's horse was struck by a bullet in the neck. Another bullet pierced through Sudh Singh's saddle. The third hit the handle of his sword. The father and son had a miraculous escape. Gurbakhsh Singh died in 1795, and Sudh Singh in 1813.

The family decided to submit to Ranjit Singh. One of their trusted men, Gaja Singh was sent to Lahore with two lakhs of rupees, one elephant and a number of horses. Ranjit Singh took the presents and despatched Ganda Singh Safi to seize their fort of Jassar, situated 8 kms from Doda. Safi failed to capture it. Ranjit Singh on hearing it laughed and remarked :

"The Sāfi has lost his sāfā."

Ganda Singh's duty was to clean furniture and other things. So he was called Sāfi, the cleaner. Sāfā in Panjabi implied a turban which was a symbol of respect. Losing a turban was considered disgraceful and humiliating.

The Maharaja treated Gaja Singh well and with consideration. The family was granted 25 villages on the condition of providing 18 horse-

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men on demand. Gaja Singh was in command of these troops. He fought in the campaigns of Attock, Kashmir, Mankerah and Multan. He died in 1823.

4. *Jodh Singh Bhangi* possessed the parganahs of Wazirabad, Ghaniwala, Gharthal, Jagdeo, Karial, Mitranwali, Saurian and Talwandi Musa Khan containing about 500 villages. He was married to the daughter of Sahib Singh Bhangi. He was a brave warrior and powerful chief. Legally he was a vassal of Sahib Singh Bhangi, but Mahan Singh Sukarchakia had won him over. In the campaign of Sodhra against Sahib Singh, Jodh Singh supported Mahan Singh. After some time he realized his mistake and retired to Wazirabad in the midst of fighting. In 1797 he joined the Sikh chiefs against the Pathans of Kasur. Ranjit Singh was growing impatient to annex Wazirabad. He did not want to fight and resorted to trickery. He invited him to Lahore on a friendly visit. Jodh Singh came at the head of a strong force. Ranjit Singh received him with the greatest warmth and affection, and bestowed all sorts of favours on him. Jodh Singh sent back his force retaining only 25 attendants. Jodh Singh waited upon Ranjit Singh daily in the Saman Burj. At this time his men stayed outside the fort. Ranjit Singh planned one day to seize Jodh Singh. A number of men were kept in hiding. Ranjit Singh gave a secret signal to his men to take hold of Jodh Singh. As the men were approaching, Jodh Singh stood up with his back to the wall. He unsheathed his sword and challenged them, saying, "Come on; you will not be able to capture me alive. I have never learnt to turn my back on an enemy." Such bravery, courage and daring in the full durbar deeply impressed Ranjit Singh. He rebuked his men, gave Jodh Singh rich presents, added some jagirs to his estates, and bade him a respectful farewell. This took place in 1802. Jodh Singh passed away in 1809. Ranjit Singh immediately came to seize Wazirabad and his movable property. Wazirabad was a part of the Gujrat estate. Sahib Singh came to defend his territory. Ranjit Singh took him prisoner and seized all the lands and property of Jodh Singh.

5. *Kala Singh of Hasan Abdal* was a sweeper[1] by caste and was of pitch dark colour as his name indicated. He was converted to Sikhism

[1]Latif, *Panjab*, 291, says the Mazhabi Sikhs were not appointed to any post of trust under their conquerors (the Sikhs), and were little better than serfs. Can there be a post of greater responsibility than that of the Warden of the Marches given to Kala Singh? Further Jhanda Singh's aide-de-camp was a sweeper who treacherously shot down his master.

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by Jhanda Singh. He joined Gujar Singh's force. He was a bold and desperate fellow. Gujar Singh appointed him *thanadar* at Hasan Abdal lying mid-way between Rawalpindi and Attock. He fully settled down amidst the fanatic and warlike Muslim chiefs of Gandgarh and its neighbourhood. He established his headquarters at Sarae Kali 35 kms from Rawalpindi and 11 kms from Hasan Abdal or Panja Sahib. The village of Sarae Kali stood on the banks of a small river called Kāli. It flows from the east and joins river Haro. Kali is a deep and narrow river. There was a big, pucca sarae. Near it there was a stone bridge over this river. This was the last frontier outpost of the Sikhs. It stood in the valley surrounded on all sides by mountains. Kala Singh was a terror in this region. But he lacked the sense of loyalty. After some time he shifted his allegiance to Charat Singh Sukarchakia. On Charat Singh's death in 1774, his son Mahan Singh grew suspicious of Kala Singh, and replaced him by his trusted follower Jiwan Singh. Ranjit Singh found Jiwan Singh intriguing with the Afghans and sent a trusted officer from Lahore to succeed him.

6. *Karam Singh Dodia* of Jassarwal, 96 kms from Lahore and 10 kms from Narowal in Sialkot district retained permanently 500 cavalry and 1,000 infantry. He possessed ten pieces of cannon, eight wall pieces and fifty camel guns. In an emergency he could assemble a force of 2,000 horse and 1,000 foot. His territory yielded about eight lakhs of rupees as annual revenues. He had several forts such as Bhopalwala, Gopal, Jassarwal, Sambrial, 24 kms from Wazirabad and 11 kms from Sialkot and Sihowal.

7. *Karam Singh Dulu* was the chief of Jhang district, bordering on the Chenab. He commanded about 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry as a permanent force, and on occasions he could muster 6,000 horse and 3,000 foot. He had eight strong forts in his territory that yielded him nearly fourteen lakhs of rupees every year.

Karam Singh seized this territory from Sials a warlike and very brave people who were closely related to Ghebas, and Tiwanas. The great Sial chief Walidad Khan possessed Chiniot, Khewa, Kot Kamalia, Mirak, Shorkot, the greater part of the country between the Ravi and the Chenab up to Pindi Bhattian, and the country to the west of the Chenab and the Jehlam up to Mankerah. He died in 1747. His nephew Inayatullah succeeded him. He was a very brave general. It was from him that Karam Singh Dulu had seized a large part of his country. Inayatullah fought twenty-two battles, mostly

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against Karam Singh to recover his territory. Dulu means a snake. He seems to have got this title on account of his holding himself against the brave Sials. Inayatullah died in 1787. Ranjit Singh expelled Karam Singh's son Jassa Singh from his territory in 1803. According to Sayyid Muhammad Latif he escaped in three clothes which he was then wearing. The Maharaja also seized Karam Singh's fort of Waso Sohawa from Gujar Singh's brother Chait Singh who was imprisoned in the fort of Gujranwala.

8. *Lahna Singh Kahlon:* Lahna Singh's grandfather at a young age left his village Sadhawala in Amritsar district during a famine and went to Mastapur near Kartarpur in the Jalandhar Doab. There he was adopted by a carpenter. His son Dargaha was born there. Dargaha's son was Lahna Singh. Dargaha settled at Ladhewala. He was poor and his son grazed the village cattle. One day his cattle strayed into a neighbour's field. His father thrashed him. He fled away from home and having wandered about for some time reached Roranwala village situated 2 kms from Atari. Gurbakhsh Singh Bhangi, a Sandhu Jat, was the chief of this parganah containing about forty villages.

He had been a companion of Bhuma Singh, and was then under Hari Singh. He was one of the best fighters in the Bhangi Misl. Lahna Singh took up service under Gurbakhsh Singh as a trooper. The young man still in his teens displayed great dash and daring, good behaviour and deep loyalty. Gurbakhsh Singh was so highly pleased with Lahna Singh that he adopted him as a son. The old sardar had only one married daughter and no son. Gurbakhsh Singh died in 1763, and Lahna Singh succeeded him.

Gurbakhsh Singh's daughter had four sons. The eldest was named Gujar Singh. He was of the same age as Lahna Singh. On account of blood relationship Gujar Singh claimed the whole property of his maternal grandfather. Feelings ran so high that Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh had to intervene in settling the dispute. They invited Lahna Singh and Gujar Singh to Waniki. Lahna Singh agreed to divide the estate in two equal halves. Gujar Singh did not accept the proposal. He rushed from Waniki and besieged Roranwala. Lahna Singh followed him, and engaged him in a number of battles. Lahna Singh proved so tough that Gujar Singh yielded and accepted the division. Roranwala remained with Lahna Singh. Gujar Singh founded a village on the site of his last battle with Lahna Singh and called it Rangarh.[1] After this the two sardars became fast friends for

[1]Khushwaqt Rae says Rangarh lay 10 kms from Amritsar.

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the rest of their lives.

The most spectacular achievement of Lahna Singh in combination with Gujar Singh was the capture of Lahore and striking the national Sikh rupee in May, 1765. Ahmad Shah Durrani had just retired from the Panjab after his seventh invasion. He had appointed a Hindu Khatri, Kabuli Mal, governor of Lahore, thinking that he might be acceptable to the Sikhs. Kabuli Mal was in the train of the Durrani who was halting at Rohtas. The capital was in the charge of his nephew Amir Singh. Ahmad Shah had crossed the Indus, and Kabuli Mal was on his way back to Lahore. Lahna Singh formed a plan to attack Lahore and Gujar Singh agreed to accompany him. At the head of a strong body of 2,000 men they left village Rangrohini and reached Lahore at mid-night. Dayal Singh a resident of Lahore, showed them a drain in the fort wall.[1] Gujar Singh was the first to pass through dirty water with some squeezing followed by fifty chosen followers. Then Lahna Singh entered in the same way. Amir Singh was seized while enjoying the performance of dancing girls. He was detained at Mozang. On hearing this Kabuli Mal took refuge at Jammu.

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Lahna Singh retained the fort and the city. Gujar Singh raised no objection because he respected him as his maternal uncle. He occupied the uninhabited region on the eastern side of the walled city situated between the Shalimar Gardens and the city. Next morning came Sobha Singh, of Jai Singh Kanhiya. He seized a village fellow the southern suburbs of the city having Zeb-un-Nisa's gardens. There he constructed a fort called Nawankot. The triumvirate struck the second Sikh national coin after Banda Bahadur.

During his eighth campaign Ahmad Shah Durrani reached Lahore on December 22, 1766. Lahna Singh and Gujar Singh retired towards Kasur. A deputation of leading Muslim citizens of Lahore waited on the Durrani. They told the Shah that Lahna Singh was a good and kind ruler. In spite of his power he treated Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike. He maintained perfect peace and order in the city and the territory under his control. On the day of 'Id he bestowed turbans on the *Qazis, Muftis* and *Imams* of mosques. They requested him to confirm him in the governorship of the Panjab.

The Durrani also realized that no non-Sikh governor could stay in Lahore. He sent a firman with a quantity of dry fruits of Afghanistan

[1] *Gulgasht-e-Panjab*, 17a, calls this place the Hatyapur Gate.

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to Lahna Singh. Lahna Singh expressed his gratitude to the Shah and explained his inability to accept the offer. He also returned the fruits saying that they were the food of the kings. He was a poor cultivator whose diet was *china*, an inferior and coarse grain used in those days by the poorest people in the country. He sent a sample of it with the fruits.

At the end of December, 1766, Lahna Singh joined other Sikh sardars and plundered the Shah's camp at Lahore. While returning home Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Dadan Khan governor of Lahore. The Muslim leaders of the capital waited on the new governor. They told him that they were quite happy with Lahna Singh's administration, and that the Sikhs would not let him live in peace. They advised him to surrender the capital to Lahna Singh. Lahna Singh granted him a daily allowance of twenty rupees for life. The Pathan chiefs of Kasur also paid Lahna Singh a nominal tribute as a token of submission.

Ghulam Sarwar, an English intelligencer, passed right across the Panjab in 1793 on his way to Kabul and back again in 1795. His statements were admitted by the Governor-General as authentic. He wrote :

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"The ryots of the Subah of Lahore who are of the Sikhs and Afghans, a nation of soldiers, pay one-fourth part of the produce of their lands; payment in cash is no longer in use, but the usage above-mentioned is prevalent. Hence the ryots of the Subah of Lahore are contented and happy."

The third invasion of Shah Zaman took place in 1796-97. When the Shah had crossed river Jehlam, Lahna Singh permitted the people of Lahore and Shahdara to retire to any place of safety. On Shah Zaman's crossing river Chenab, Lahna Singh sent for the Muslim leaders of note and offered them to take charge of the city; "but was persuaded by their entreaties to stay two days more." The distance between the Ravi and the Chenab on the highway was about one hundred kilometres. As the Shah was marching slowly, it was expected that he would take three or four days in reaching Lahore.

On the second day Lahna Singh summoned Mian Chiragh-ud-din Shah Sultanpuri, Mir Ghalib Shah, Mian Muhammad Ashiq and other Muslim leaders. "Without manifesting any partiality for the Hindoos", he made over the city to their charge. He told them that he was leaving the fort in good repair without any damage done to it. He requested them to use their influence with the Shah to secure

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lenient treatment to the people. Afterwards he got into a palanquin as he was growing old and was not in good health, and accompanied by 100 horse, one field piece and an elephant halted at the fort of Haji Said Khan.

On 31st December, 1796, Sher Muhammad Khan Wazir at the head of 12,000 troops entered Lahore. He delivered a letter from Shah Zaman for Lahna Singh, promising him all concessions and favours.

Lahna Singh ruled Lahore most successfully for thirty-two years. He enjoyed complete obedience and respect of the subjects. He died in September, 1797, leaving behind a son named Chait Singh. About the same time Sobha Singh, another triumvirate of Lahore, passed away. His son Mohar Singh succeeded him. The third ruler, Gujar Singh, had breathed his last in 1790. His son Sahib Singh lived at Gujrat.

Lahna Singh and Sobha Singh retained a permanent body of 3,000 cavalry and 2,000 infantry, and in an emergency could muster a force of 7,000 horse and 4,000 foot. Their country yielded about 15 lakhs of rupees per year.

James Browne computed the forces of the Lahore chiefs at 22,150 horse and 8,050 foot. The estimate of Imam-ud-din Husaini was at about 8,000 cavalry and the same number of infantry. In 1797 the military strength of Chait Singh and Mohar Singh was estimated at 16,000 men.

By this time Ranjit Singh had risen to the most prominent position among the Sikhs. Shah Zaman had left Panjab in February, 1797. In June Lahna Singh with his only son Chait Singh joined Ranjit Singh in his campaign against Hashmat Khan Chatha son of Ahmad Khan of Rasulnagar later renamed Ramnagar. After a brief resistance Hashmat Khan sued for peace. He was granted two villages for his maintenance, and the rest of the territory and the fort passed on to Ranjit Singh.

Lahna Singh was succeeded by Chait Singh. He had eight wives but no son. A son was born to Hukam Kaur after Chait Singh's death. During Shah Zaman's last invasion in 1798-99, Chait Singh joined the other Sikh chiefs in pursuing guerilla warfare against the invader. He was at Amritsar when he learnt that Shah Zaman had decided to return homeward from Lahore. He and Milkha Singh journeyed from Amritsar in the night between 3 and 4 January, 1799, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Lahore. No sooner did the Shah cross the river Ravi than both the Sikh chiefs entered Lahore, and established Sikh rule.

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Lahore was at this time in the hands of the triumvirate Sikh chiefs, Chait Singh, Mohar Singh son of Sobha Singh and Sahib Singh son of Gujar Singh. Sahib Singh generally resided at Gujrat. Chait Singh was in possession of the city and the fort, while Mohar Singh controlled the southern suburbs outside the walled city. Disagreement prevailed between them resulting in frequent fighting. A British Government report said:

"Chait Singh son of Lahna Singh deceased and Mohar Singh are at Lahore, and commit great oppression on the inhabitants of the city." Ranjit Singh captured the city and the fort from Chait Singh on July 7, 1799.

9. *Mahtab Singh Bhangi of Wadala:* Wadala is a village near Daska in Sialkot district. Mahtab Singh was its chief. Mahan Singh invited him to attend a family gathering at Gujranwala. He went in a grand procession at the head of 500 men. He was well received. On the following day he was imprisoned. Mahan Singh sent a force to seize his territory and property. His four sons put up a bold front. A compromise was made. The young men were to pay a sum of Rs. 1,25,000 for the release of their father.

After some time Nidhan Singh Hattu seized Wadala. Ranjit Singh expelled him after the battle of Daska in 1809.

10. *Milkha Singh:* One of the most notable Bhangi sardars attached to Gujar Singh was Milkha Singh. He belonged to village Kaleke near Kasur. He founded the village of Thepur in Lahore district and was called Thepuria. He seized many villages in the districts of Firozpur, Lahore, Gujranwala and Gujrat. On the north-western side he was always in the advance-guard of Bhangis. He was at his best while fighting the tough, warlike Jat and Pathan tribes. The Bhangis and Sukarchakias seized territories turn by turn. Amritsar and Lahore were the strongholds of Bhangis. Eminabad 56 kms from Lahore was also occupied by Gujar Singh. Gujranwala 13 kms farther away in the north-westerly direction on the road to Kabul, was under Sukarchakias. Wazirabad, 32 kms and Gujrat 13 kms farther were under Bhangis. Jehlam 53 kms and Rohtas 17 kms were with Sukarchakias. Milkha Singh firmly established himself 110 kms distant from Rohtas at Rawalpindi. Charat Singh Sukarchakia fixed his outpost at Fatahjang, 48 kms from Rawalpindi on the road to Kohat. Kala Singh Bhangi, a Mazhabi Sikh, advanced farther on the direct road to Peshawar and posted himself at Kali Sarae 11 kms from Hasan Abdal or Panja Sahib and 35 kms from Rawalpindi. Another Bhangi dare-

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devil, Ran Singh Pādā, held the plains between Hasan Abdal and Attock, a distance of 53 kms.

It is most remarkable to note that Milkha Singh's wife supervised the work of both Kala Singh and Ran Singh Pada, and resided for most of the time at Kali Sarae. The place was situated on the invader's highway, and it was surrounded by warlike and fierce tribes, who frequently attacked them. Milkha Singh appointed Sadhu Singh to supply rations and clothing to Sikh troops. Budh Singh was entrusted with the duty of revenue collection.

Rawalpindi was then a small hamlet containing about a dozen huts of Hindu Rawal mendicants who extracted a living by reading hand palms and making rough predictions and by telling festival days, etc., in advance by charging a pice or two or some dry foodstuff from their Muslim clients. Milkha Singh was fascinated with its situation. It lies in plains. The hills are 7 kms off. The higher range is 11 kms to the north. The snowy peaks are 16 kms from this place. A number of hilly streams intersect this tract. He realized its strategic and commercial value, being situated on the main road from Kabul to Lahore, as well as to Hazara, Kashmir and Kohat. Milkha Singh invited traders from Bhera, Chakwal, Miani and Pind Dadan Khan to settle there by offering them free gifts of land. He started construction of buildings employing thousands of poor Muslims as workers. The hostile bellicose tribes of the neighbourhood found in Milkha Singh a tough warrior, but a considerate ruler. They respected his name and power, and respectfully called him Milkha Singh Pindiwala. Milkha Singh reconciled the most powerful Gakhar chiefs by giving them 192 villages in jagir subject only to a nominal tribute.

In 1783 one of the most terrible famines broke out in Northern India. In Rawalpindi and Hazara districts "this famine fell with terrible severity. Grain sold at 3½ to 4½ seers per rupee, and was not to be had even at that price when the famine was at its height; and popular accounts describe the district as nearly depopulated." Shahamat Ali who travelled in this region half a century later found the Muslims praising Milkha Singh. He writes: "Before the country was conquered by the Sikhs, there was a prolonged famine, from the effects of which it greatly recovered under the good administration of Malka Singh, who was left in charge by Gujar Singh."

Shahamat Ali's description of Rawalpindi can give us an idea of the good work done by Milkha Singh. He writes :

"Rawalpindee is a small town, and an abundance of supplies pro-

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curable; dry Kabul fruits are to be had in plenty. It is surrounded by a mud wall about a mile in circumference : the buildings are generally of mud. Shah Shujah, after his flight from Peshawer, took refuge here, and remained for several years. The house erected by him is still extant, and serves as a residence to the governor of the district, named Bhae Dal Singh, the elder brother of Bhae Maha Singh, the Sikh officer who attends the Mission.

"I may here enumerate that there are about five hundred shops in Rawalpindee : fifteen blacksmiths, ten goldsmiths, twenty confectioners, ten shops for iron and brass pots, etc., twenty shoemakers, fifteen shops of *besatis*, that is sellers of combs, scissors, thread, etc., four hundred shops of cloth merchants, grain merchants, ghee dealers, etc. The entire revenue of the town is 1,50,000 rupees per annum, including land-tax, transit duties, etc. The town is known for its manufacture of ornamental shoes : there are somewhat more than four thousand people in the town. Bhae Dal Singh is liked by the people, and has had charge of the town for six years."[1]

While retiring from the Panjab after his third invasion, Shah Zaman had appointed Shahanchibashi, his governor of Panjab. He settled at Rohtas and extended his rule up to Pind Dadan Khan. He then attacked Gujrat, but lost his life in the battle in April, 1797. Milkha Singh recovered his territory and established his outpost at Kali Sarae near Panja Sahib.

The following chiefs of Hazara district acknowledged nominal allegiance to Milkha Singh :

1. Sadat Khan, the head of the Swathis.
2. Jafar Khan was the chief of Khanpur Gakhars from 1789 to 1801
3. Gulsher Khan, the head of the Pallal Tanaolis, whom Forster visited in 1783.
4. Najibullah Khan, the Tarin chief, who vigorously governed the greater part of the Hazara plain during the latter half of the eighteenth century up to his death in 1799.
5. The widow of Najibullah Khan, known as Bari Begam, managed the state affairs with the help of her Gujar retainer Muqaddam Musharraf. (All of them submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1818.)

Shah Zaman invaded India for the fourth time in 1798-99. He crossed the river Indus at Attock by building three bridges of boats

[1] *Sikhs and Afghans*, reprint, 1970, 148-49.

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on October 19, 1798. On the Shah's approach the local chiefs had risen against the Sikhs. Milkha Singh who commanded only 2,000 horse, fought two engagements with the Mullukia zamindars at Sarae Kali and Rawalpindi. The Sikh outpost at Sarae Kali was evacuated. The three chiefs, Ran Singh Pada, Kala Singh and Milkha Singh reached Rawalpindi. They fell back by 50 kms. Milkha Singh left two assistants to collect baggage and join him. They were suddenly taken unawares by the Afghan advance-guard. They fought an action, but were defeated and captured. They were produced before Shah Zaman at Attock. They offered a ransom of three lakhs of rupees. The Shah accepted the money and "ordered both of them to be drowned in Attock." Islam Khan, a messenger sent by the English to Shah Zaman's camp, was following in the Afghan army. He wrote :

"All this I have seen with my own eyes." At Rohtas Milkha Singh joined Ranjit Singh and Karam Singh.

On December 24, 1798, Milkha Singh at the head of 500 horse joined other Sikh sardars at Amritsar. On hearing the news that Shah Zaman was returning to Kabul from Lahore, Milkha Singh and Chait Singh travelled from Amritsar in the night between 3 and 4 January, 1799, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Lahore. No sooner did the Shah cross the Ravi than both the Sikh chiefs entered Lahore and established their rule.

Milkha Singh died in 1804. Ranjit Singh called him Baba or grandfather out of respect. He supported the Maharaja in many battles on the frontier. Milkha Singh's territory yielded him an annual revenue of three lakhs. He commanded a force of 2,000 horse. He was succeeded by his son Jiwan Singh. Jiwan Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh in his Kashmir expedition in 1814. Jiwan Singh died in 1815. The Maharaja seized his territory. He incorporated Jiwan Singh's troops into his army. His officers were given appropriate places according to their merit and importance. These troops were called Derah Pindiwala. Jiwan Singh's son Anand Singh served the Maharaja faithfully.

11. *Nidhan Singh Hattu of Daska* owned many parganahs in Sialkot district with his seat at Daska. When Ranjit Singh visited Ramnagar, he summoned Nidhan Singh Hattu before him. The sardar knew that Ranjit Singh was in the habit of treacherously imprisoning independent Sikh chiefs. He replied that he would come under the security of a Sodhi priest. Ranjit Singh immediately invested Daska. His artillery could not take the fort; but Nidhan Singh's family fell into his hands. They were subjected to "shameful impositions." Ranjit

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Singh then sent a Sodhi priest with solemn assurances. The Sodhi promised security on the holy granth. Nidhan Singh fearlessly rode into Ranjit Singh's camp. In utter disregard of his oaths he fettered the sardar, and imprisoned him. He remained in gaol for six weeks. The Sodhi priest sat in *dharna* at Ranjit Singh's court and forced the Maharaja to set Nidhan Singh free. Nidhan Singh crossed into Jammu territory, and took up service with Ata Muhammad Khan of Kashmir. All his lands and property were captured by Ranjit Singh.

12. *Nusbaha Singh of Firozpur :* Gujar Singh had a brother Nusbaha Singh. Gujar Singh lived at Rangarh and Nusbaha Singh at village Bhuri Asal near Khem Karan 11 kms from Kasur on the road to Patti. This village became famous as the graveyard of American Patton tanks in the India-Pakistan war in 1965. Nusbaha Singh lived the life of a zamindar, though he had once participated in the sack of Kasur under Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh.

Nusbaha Singh was keen to possess lands on both sides of river Satluj. Gujar Singh agreed to support him. They crossed the river Satluj[1] at Husainiwala. The district of Firozpur formed a part of the Lakhi Jungle. It had a separate faujdar invested with civil and military authority by the governor of Lahore. The fort of Firozpur was in a dilapidated condition. Its faujdar on hearing the news of the sack of Kasur and of the advance of Sikh forces had fled away. Gujar Singh seized the town and the fort, and entrusted it to his nephew Gurbakhsh Singh, the eldest son of Nusbaha Singh. The Firozpur parganah then contained thirty-seven villages. Gurbakhsh Singh did not like to live in the ruined fort. He took up his residence at Sultankhanwala which had a mud fort in a good condition. The neighbouring area of Khai, Wan and Bajidpur was occupied. Gurbakhsh Singh extended his sway over a large part of territory opposite Firozpur along the western bank of the Satluj.

[1]There were a number of ferries over river Satluj, and very few fordable places which were generally dangerous owing to quicksands. Between Rupar and Harike the famous ferries were at Talwandi, Phillaur and Tihara. Between Harike and Firozpur there were seven ferries at Harike, Bhao, Asyake, Palli, Nagarka, Bara and Bareke. Below Firozpur there was a ferry near Mamdot. On the river Beas between Mandi and Hari ke Patan there were thirty-two ghats. Getting a seat in a boat was a problem. A regular scuffle ensued among passengers. Those who had got the seats dragged their womenfolk and children pulling them by hands, arms, legs and clothes. The others who wanted to get in were pushed away most violently.

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After some time the district was divided permanently. Nusbaha Singh settled down at Singhpura. His eldest son Gurbakhsh Singh was given the parganahs of Sataragarh, Bhedian and Muhalim situated to the north of the Satluj. His second son Dhanna Singh received Firozpur. He was married to Lachhman Kaur, daughter of Rae Singh of Jagadhri and Buriya on the Jamuna. The third son Gurmukh Singh got Sahjara north of the Satluj. The youngest Jai Singh retained Khai, 10 kms south-west of Firozpur, Wan and Bajidpur.

Rani Lachhman Kaur died without a male issue in 1835. The place belonged to Lahore Durbar. It was annexed by the British without any protest from Ranjit Singh. Sir George Campbell, deputy commissioner of Wadni (Moga) district writes :

"It was very doubtful whether we were entitled to it, or whether it was a Lahore fief; in fact, in the early lists it appears as a dependency of Runjeet Sing. But we were then very keen about the navigation of the Sutlej and Indus, and Runjeet, willing to oblige, yielded the point. The place was very handy to us, when we were in alliance with him, for the Afghan War, and was made a great depot for our troops. Afterwards the Sikhs much complained that when the war was over we made it a strong, permanent cantonment, and as they thought, a sort of menace to Lahore."

13. *Rae Singh of Jagadhri:* In January, 1764, Narwariye Sikhs occupied Buriya. Shortly afterwards Nanu Singh of village Jhawalmadan in Amritsar district accompanied by two brothers Bhag Singh and Rae Singh expelled the Sikhs and seized the town and parganah of Buriya. The Afghans of Aurangabad invited Nanu Singh to a feast and treacherously put him to death. Nanu Singh had no son and had adopted Rae Singh. The two brothers led an expedition against Aurangabad, defeated the Afghans and demolished their fort. They seized about two hundred villages of the region. Then they made a division. Bhag Singh was assigned Buriya with 120 villages, while Rae Singh got 84 villages including Jagadhri and Dayalgarh. On Bhag Singh's death in 1785, his son Sher Singh succeeded him. He lost his life while fighting against the British at Saharanpur in 1804.

Jagadhri had been completely ruined by Nadir Shah. Rae Singh invited traders and artisans to settle there, and made it a flourishing town. Rae Singh was the overlord of Hardwar and received a great income from there on the occasions of fairs and festivals. The state of Garhwal was tributary to him. Rae Singh was a good and sympathetic ruler.

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An Englishman Captain Mathews visited Buriya and Jagadhri in April, 1808. For his interesting account see chapter 16.

14. *Ran Singh Pada* of the Bhangi misl was a Brahman who had embraced Sikhism. He held the country between Hasan Abdal and Attock, a distance of 50 kms. He kept his headquarters at Kali Sarae, but constantly watched any movement of the Durrani armies from Kabul. He was an intrepid soldier and kept the hostile Muslim population in check. He offered resistance to enemy's scouts and intelligencers. He lost his position to Ranjit Singh in 1811.

15. *Sahib Singh of Gujrat* was the second son of Gujar Singh. His elder brother Sukha Singh was at Lahore. Sahib Singh was at Gujrat. The youngest brother Fatah Singh looked after home affairs in the ancestral village. Gujar Singh was generally busy in new expeditions and campaigns, but his headquarter was at Gujrat. Sahib Singh was married to the daughter of Charat Singh Sukarchakia.

Mahan Singh and afterwards his son Ranjit Singh strictly and implicitly believed in the old proverb that kingship knew no kinship. Mahan Singh planned to seize all the territories of Gujar Singh by cunning diplomacy as far as possible, otherwise by open warfare. Sahib Singh was haughty, self-conceited and soft-hearted. He could not see through the game, and fell an easy prey to the machinations of his brother-in-law. Under Mahan Singh's instigation Sahib Singh asked Gujar Singh to go to Lahore and give him independent charge of Gujrat. Gujar Singh declined. Sahib Singh revolted against his father. Mahan Singh sent a force under Dal Singh to support Sahib Singh. A hard battle was fought between father and son at Islamgarh. Sahib Singh was defeated but was forgiven. Another incident happened shortly afterwards. Mahan Singh attacked Rasulnagar. The Chatha Pathan chief escaped into Gujar Singh's camp. Mahan Singh demanded his surrender, but Gujar Singh flatly refused. Sahib Singh secretly handed him over to Mahan Singh who put him to death. Gujar Singh was stung to remorse and sorrow. Mahan Singh then incited Sahib Singh to capture Lahore from his brother Sukha Singh. Sahib Singh attacked Lahore and killed Sukha Singh. Gujar Singh died of grief in 1790.

Mahan Singh invited Fatah Singh to Gujranwala. He told him that he was a petty zamindar, while his brother Sahib Singh was a Raja. He incited him to demand half the country from his brother. Sahib Singh seized all the home estates also in 1790. Fatah Singh lived for some time with Mahan Singh and then went to Kapurthala where he

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died in penury and pensiveness.

Now came the turn of Sahib Singh. Mahan Singh demanded tribute from Sahib Singh who declined. Mahan Singh seized his village Wasoki. Sahib Singh made a verbal protest. Mahan Singh besieged Gujrat in 1791. Sahib Singh managed to escape from Gujrat to his fort of Sodhra on the Chenab. Mahan Singh laid siege to it and took Sahib Singh prisoner. Karam Singh Dulu of Chiniot came to the help of Sahib Singh, while Mahan Singh's ally Jodh Singh retired to Wazirabad. Mahan Singh's sister came to her brother's camp and tried her level best to persuade him to spare Sahib Singh. [Ama hech pesh na raft, wa Sardar Mahbūs khulās na gasht.] But the devil in him listened to nothing. When the human efforts had failed, nature came to the rescue of Sahib Singh. At the time of hard fighting Mahan Singh fainted in the howdah. The driver immediately brought him to the camp. Realizing the seriousness of the case his men brought him to Gujranwala, where he breathed his last after three days in 1792. Sodhra was captured by Ranjit Singh the same year.

On the eve of Shah Zaman's first invasion it was estimated that Sahib Singh's territory yielded an annual revenue of thirteen lakhs of rupees. The following parganahs were included in his territory: Bajwat, Gujrat, Mirpur, 40 kms north of Jehlam, Phularwan 16 kms south of Bhera, and Sodhra, 6 kms north-east of Wazirabad. He owned twelve forts : 1. Barwala, a brick-built fort, circumference nearly 6 kms with no guns. 2. Chaomukh. 3. Gujrat. 4. Jamke, 26 kms east of Wazirabad. 5. Kamanwala. 6. Galiana, 24 kms south-east of Jehlam. 7. Lakhanwal, 20 kms north-east of Gujrat. 8. Mangla, 26 kms north of Jehlam. 9. Mirpur. 10. Phularwan. 11. Sodhra and 12. Sūk.

Sahib Singh had a body of 2,000 horse in permanent employment, but when occasion arose, he could raise a force of 8,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry. The following commanders served under him: Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi with 1,200 horse, Ran Singh Pada with 200 horse and Bundu Khan Gheba with 600 horse.

James Browne estimated Sikh forces in the forts of Gujrat and Rohtas at 7,500 horse and 2,500 foot. Sayyid Imam-ud-din Husaini computed Sahib Singh's military strength at 4,000 horse and 4,000 foot. A British intelligencer counted it at 6,000 horse. Sahib Singh had a big gun named Shah Pasand.

Shah Zaman's 1st invasion

In the winter of 1794 Shah Zaman crossed river Indus at Attock

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by a bridge of boats. The Sikh chiefs fell back. The Shah left Shahanchibashi near Jehlam to carry on the campaign against the Sikhs and himself returned to Kabul.

Shahanchibashi sent Bahadur Khan son of Faiz Ali Khan Shankarwala at the head of 12,000 horse, to conquer Gujrat. Sahib Singh came out of the city to oppose him. During the fight Bahadur Khan was struck by a bullet and he fell dead at once. The Afghans took to flight. Many of them were slain.

At this stage Ranjit Singh joined Sahib Singh, and both of them issued out in pursuit of the Afghans. When they reached the bank of river Jehlam, Shahanchibashi was terrified and fled away to Peshawar. Rohtas, Pothohar and Gheb remained with the Sikhs as before.

Shahanchibashi's expedition to Gujrat, April, 1797

Shah Zaman had appointed Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi governor of the Sind Sagar Doab with his headquarters at Rohtas. On the Shah's return to Kabul, the Sikh sardars were getting ready to take possession of their old territories. Ranjit Singh was keen to re-occupy Rohtas. Sahib Singh and Milkha Singh were determined to recover Rawalpindi. Hayat Khan zamindar, son of Chaudhri Rahmat Khan Waraich of Jalalpur Jattan, had seized Islamgarh. The Shahanchibashi had captured a beautiful Brahman girl of Haranpur village and after converting her to Islam had married her. This was a sufficient provocation to the Sikhs. The Shahanchi decided to attack the Sikhs unaware. He came to Islamgarh and from there marched by an easterly route towards Gujrat. Sahib Singh and Ranjit Singh intercepted him near the village Bartonkal. In the engagement the Shahanchi was struck by an arrow, and he was seriously wounded and then expired on 29 April, 1797, in the battlefield. A large number of his soldiers were shot down dead. The head of Shahanchi was cut off. It was put on a bamboo and was displayed in many villages and towns. Ganesh Das says that the Brahman girl was recovered from his tent and was restored to her parents. They did not accept her. She lived as a chaste woman. Her *marhi* was worshipped as a *Sati*.

A number of Afghans were captured by the Sikhs at Jalalpur Jattan. They were drowned in the tank outside the town. It was called Fatahsar.

During Shah Zaman's invasions Sahib Singh used to send his family and treasure to the hills. In June, 1797, Sahib Singh joined Ranjit Singh in his campaign against Hashmat Khan son of Ahmad Khan

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Chatha of Rasulnagar. The Pathan chief sued for peace through Sahib Singh. Ranjit Singh granted Hashmat Khan two villages, and took possession of his territory.

Next year Shah Zaman invaded India for the last time. He was at Gujrat on November 18, 1798. All the places in the Sikh occupation had been evacuated by them. The zamindars of Shahdara invited Nizam-ud-din of Kasur to take possession of the forts evacuated by the Sikhs. He arrived there at the head of 400 horse. On November 18, 1798, he was attacked by Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh with 500 horse. Nizam-ud-din received a shot in the leg and fell from his horse. He was instantly removed from the battlefield and regained consciousness after two hours. Fifty Afghans lost their lives in the action, while only 20 Sikhs were killed. The son of Shahanchibashi came to the rescue of the Kasur chief. He massacred the inhabitants of the village but did not pursue the Sikhs. He then retired to Eminabad and waited there for the arrival of the Shah.

Sahib Singh with Ranjit Singh and other Sikh chiefs attacked Wazir Wafadar Khan on 19 November between Gujrat and Wazirabad and drove him backward. On 24 November, Shah Zaman sent a contingent of 10,000 troops to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh at the head of 500 horse were patrolling 13 kms from Amritsar. They sighted the Afghans and instantly engaged them in a fight. Other Sikhs numbering 2,000 joined in the combat. The battle raged for three hours, and about 500 men on each side were killed. The Afghans were forced to retreat to Lahore.

On the withdrawal of Shah Zaman from the Panjab in January, 1799, Ranjit Singh sent an expedition under Sahib Singh to conquer Kashmir. Sahib Singh was at Bhimbar when Ranjit Singh came to know that the governor of Kashmir had applied to Shah Zaman for help. Ranjit Singh was not prepared to provoke a fresh Durrani invasion, and recalled Sahib Singh.

After Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore in 1799, a plot was hatched by Gulab Singh Bhangi to kill Ranjit Singh. Sahib Singh joined in this intrigue. In 1802 they met at Bhasin between Lahore and Amritsar in which Gulab Singh was killed.

Nihal Singh Atariwala and Diwan Mohkam Chand were both in the service of Sahib Singh. He picked up a quarrel with them, and they left him and went over to Ranjit Singh.

In 1806 Sahib Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh to Patiala and Shahabad. He was married to a Nabha princess and wished to see

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his relatives. Ranjit Singh did not like Sahib Singh's insubordinate attitude, and made him no grants in the Cis-Satluj region.

In 1809 Jodh Singh of Wazirabad passed away. Ranjit Singh rushed to this place to seize all his lands and property. Wazirabad was a part of the Gujrat estate and Jodh Singh's overlord was Sahib Singh. He came to argue with Ranjit Singh about it, and was immediately taken prisoner. The parganahs of Wazirabad containing about 500 villages and all the personal property of Jodh Singh came into Ranjit Singh's possession. Sahib Singh escaped in the darkness of night to Gujrat. Ranjit Singh despatched Hukam Singh Atariwala and Sewa Singh to pursue him. After a brief resistance Sahib Singh fled away with 50 horsemen to his fort of Deva Batala, situated on the borders of Jammu territory. Ranjit Singh at once annexed all his territories worth two lakhs and a half annually, and his property worth four lakhs. This happened in September, 1809. Sahib Singh's son Gulab Singh had joined Ranjit Singh against his father. He recovered a jagir worth Rs. 25,000 annually. Sahib Singh took refuge at Bhimbar. He was living a life of poverty. Sahib Singh's mother Māi Lachhmi waited on Ranjit Singh and implored him for a grant of land for their subsistence. Ranjit Singh restored to Sahib Singh four villages of Bajwat, Kallowal, Sohawa and Rajiwala, in Sialkot district worth Rs. 10,000 annually.

Sahib Singh's Diwan, Haqiqat Rae, presented himself at the court of the Maharaja, on December 22, 1810, and requested permission for his master to take possession of the new estates. Ranjit Singh asked him to wait for a few days. On 23 December, 1810, the Maharaja granted one horse to Sahib Singh as a token of his kindness, and permitted him to enter upon his new taluqas. On 24 December Sahib Singh attended the court to thank the Maharaja. Ranjit Singh told Sahib Singh that he regarded him "like his own father Mahan Singh, that he would always look after and protect him and his dignity and that he should go thoroughly re-assured to Bajwat and Kallowal which had been granted to him and take their possession." Sahib Singh was destined to enjoy this jagir for one year only.

Sahib Singh died in 1811 at Bajwat where his tomb exists. On account of his soft ways of living the Sikhs called him *Ikhlaq-e-Zanan* or womanish. But he proved his manliness twice in winning victory over the Afghans.

A.C. Elliott in the Chronicles of Gujrat writes :

"Both rulers (Gujar Singh and Sahib Singh) are still (in 1902)

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gratefully remembered for their good and peaceful administration. The agents of Ranjit Singh are, on the contrary, remembered for their cruelty and rapaciousness."

Sahib Singh had four wives. His first wife was Raj Kaur, real sister of Ranjit Singh's father Mahan Singh. His second wife was a Nabha princess. Daya Kaur, daughter of Diwan Singh Virk, was his third wife. Ratan Kaur was first married to Mul Singh of Daburji, and then taken as a wife by Sahib Singh. Daya Kaur and Ratan Kaur were real sisters. The fame of their beauty had spread all over the Panjab. Ranjit Singh could not resist the temptation of possessing them and without giving any thought to the delicacy of relationship took them as his wives. Daya Kaur was the reputed mother of Kashmira Singh and Peshawara Singh, and Ratan Kaur of Multana Singh.

16. *Sobha Singh* belonged to village Kanha Kachha in Lahore district. His father was Milkhi, a Sandhu Jat. He was a respectable zamindar and owned sufficient land, but it was not very productive. So the life was not comfortable. Sobha Singh was attracted by the success of Sikh young men like Jai Singh Kanhiya, his village fellow. He took up service with Thakur Singh of village Rosianwala. The boy was handsome, strong and daring. He employed the boy as a domestic servant, and gave him training in horsemanship as well as in the use of arms. Sobha Singh heard the fame of the Bhangi sardars, in particular of Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh. He approached Jhanda Singh and offered himself as a soldier. Jhanda Singh administered pahul to him and recruited him. Thakur Singh loved Sobha Singh as a son, brought him back, and treated him with great consideration. Thakur Singh lost his life in fighting in village Bahirān, and Sobha Singh succeeded him as owner of his lands and leader of his band.

Sobha Singh was deeply attached to Charat Singh Sukarchakia, and both had become brothers by exchanging turbans. Both of them went to Lahore to have a share along with Gujar Singh and Lahna Singh. Sobha Singh served the Sukarchakias faithfully until his death.

Territories of the Bhangi Misl

Cis-Satluj region

Buriya and Jagadhri on the Jamuna (204 villages), and on the Satluj Bajidpur, Bhedian, Firozpur, Khai, Muhalim, Naggar, Sahjara, Sataragarh, Singhpura and Wan.

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Bari Doab

Amritsar, Bhairowal, Bulaki (29 villages), Chhina, Chubhal, Haibatpur, Karmala, Kohali, Lahore, Majitha, Mirowal, Multan (from 1772 to 1780), Naushahra, Sainsra, Sirhali, Taran Taran, Vairowal.

Rachna Doab

It was distributed as follows :

1. Amir Singh Baba—Gandanpur.

2. Bhag Singh Hallowalia-Bal, Budha Gorhaya, Chāngi Chāngā Dhodha given in jagir to Asa Singh, Dorike, Gondal, Kasowala, Lurike, Saukhandwind given to Sahib Singh, Zafarwal. Bhag Singh's two sons built two forts called after their names Qila Sobha Singh[1] and Qila Subah Singh. His territory fetched him two and half lakhs annually.

Bhag Singh had given some help to Nidhan Singh during Ranjit Singh's expedition against him. Bhag Singh was arrested with his son Subah Singh. They were kept as prisoners at Lahore. On Bhag Singh's death his territory and property were confiscated.

3. Būr Singh of village Marākā near Lahore and his son Jassa Singh seized Daska.

4. Desa Singh—Chaubara, Govindke, Khoneke, Kilalwala.

5. Dhanna Singh Kalaswalia—Allar, Kalaswala, Maharajke, Pānwana. He died in 1793.

6. Gurbakhsh Singh Waraich—Doda, Jasar, Ranjrur, Sadhanwal, and Wazirbad. He captured some Jammu territory and built a fort close to Jammu border. He died in 1795.

7. Hukam Singh Chimni—A Roras.

8. Jhanda Singh, head of the Bhangi Misl—Adamke, Bahadurpur, Ban Bajwa, Chāhār, Chaprār seized from Jammu, Ghuinke, Kul Bajwa, Kundanpur, Muradpur, Rachara, Rangpur, Sialkot, Sodhreke, Sudhake, Agoke and Zhora which was granted to Sahib Singh Gujratia.

Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh appointed four deputies to administer this region with Sialkot as their headquarters. They were Mohar Singh Atariwala, Natha Singh Shahid, Sahib Singh Aynāwala, and Jiwan Singh. They divided the town and the estate into four parts. Each invited traders and artisans to settle in the city. Thus Sialkot became prosperous. The keeper of the fort of Sialkot was Jiwan

[1]The village of Qila Sobha Singh was built on the ruined heap in 1788 AD. Qila Subah Singh was founded in 1791.

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Singh, who held Charwa (3 villages), Gangowal and Kumanwali where Brij Raj Dev was killed. These three parganahs belonged to Jammu.

9. Jodh Singh Wazirabadia[1] possessed several places such as Begowala, Gharthal, Gujra, Kāyanwāla, Mitranwali, Saurian, Sodhra, Talwandi Musa Khan.

10. Karam Singh Chhina—Khanna, Mirakewal.

11. Karam Singh Dulu—Badoke, Chiniot, Jhang, Kotli Loharan.

12. Lahna Singh of Lahore—Phaguwala.

13. Malhan Singh—Sahowala.

14. Nahar Singh Chamyari—Ajnala, Badiana, Chamyari, Chewindah, Chhor, Dhamtal, Jahur, Jhirwah, Khanowala, Lalah Marara, Mundeke Bajwa, Pasrur, Sankhatra[2], Shahzadah, Sihowal, Throh, all worth two lakhs of rupees annually. After some time he left Bhangi Misl and joined Kanhiyas. He died in 1806. Ranjit Singh seized all his parganahs at once.

15. Nidhan Singh Hattu—Akbar, Bhatti Bhango, Dewalah, Dhamonke, Ghilotian, Jabhoke, Mokhal, Nidala, Wadalah.

16. Sahib Singh Bedi of Una—Chitti Shaikhan.

17. Sahib Singh Gujratia—Badhana, Bājwāt, Hamidpur, Jumedpur, Rajiwala, Sohawa.

18. Sawan Singh—Kopra, Pathanwali.

19. Sham Singh—Bhagowal.

20. Sudh Singh Chhina (Chhina is a village situated 8 kms from Raja Sansi in Amritsar district.)—Bājrā, Firozke, Kāleke, Rorke, Seoki.

21. Sudh Singh of Sandho—Choki.

Chaj Doab

Ahmadabad, Bhera[3], Gujrat, Miani[4], Musa Chuha, Qadirabad, Waraich Mith. The Bhangis seized from Muhammad Khan of Sahiwal

[1]Jodh Singh, son-in-law of Sahib Singh of Gujrat, belonged to Pasrur. Pasrur is the corrupted form of Pursarur meaning delightful.

[2]Its original name was Hemnagar. Sankhatra was the name of a zamindar of this place. He led such a pious life that the people began to call the whole parganah after him. His tomb is a place of worship. He belonged to the Deo tribe.

[3]Bhera was assigned to Dhanna Singh. Ranjit Singh seized it from Dhanna Singh's son Jodh Singh.

[4]Miani was given to Tara Singh. Mahan Singh Sukarchakia ousted him in 1783.

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the whole Doab east of Sahiwal, Shahpur and the Salt Range as far as the Chenab.

Sind Sagar Doab

Jagatpur, Jherar, Kali Sarae, Perwala, Rawalpindi.

The total military strength of this misl was estimated at 15,000 horse and foot, but they could raise another ten thousand horsemen in an emergency. Their annual income was about one crore of rupees.

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CHAPTER 11

The Kanhiya Misl

JAI SINGH

Amar Singh Kingra commanded a band of Sikh youths numbering about a hundred. His deputy was Jai Singh, a Sandhu Jat of village Kanha Kachha, 21 kms east of Lahore on the road to Firozpur. His father was Khushhal Singh who earned his living by selling grass and wood at Lahore. (*Khār faroshi namudah guzrān mekard.*) Jai Singh was fed up with this kind of life. He heard about the daring deeds of Sikhs. He took pahul from Nawab Kapur Singh and joined the band of Amar Singh Kingra. On account of the name of his village, his handsome appearance like Krishna Kanhiya, and as he was quick on the trigger, he was called Kanha or Kanhiya, and was made the leader of the band.

Jai Singh was noted for dash and daring. In January, 1754, he and Charat Singh Sukarchakia dressed in Muslim garbs entered Lahore one dark evening inside Shah Alami Gate, and plundered rich merchants and jewellers living near the palaces of Begams known as Parimahal and Rangmahal.

The same year Jai Singh's brother Jhanda Singh was killed while fighting with Nidhan Singh Randhawa at Raval Kotli. Jai Singh took his widow Desān as a wife. In 1759 she gave birth to Gurbakhsh Singh. Gurbakhsh Singh was first married to the daughter of Hamir Singh of Nabha. He was again married at the age of nine to Sada Kaur, daughter of Dasaundha Singh of Ankolwala. Khushwaqt Rae says that Sada Kaur was the daughter of Bhuma Singh Bhangi. His youngest brother was Ganda Singh who later on settled at Rukhanwala village.

From May to September, 1758, Adina Beg Khan was the viceroy of the Panjab. He was a great disciplinarian, and would not tolerate

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any disturbances created by the Sikhs. He despatched a force under Mir Aziz in their pursuit. A number of Sikhs took shelter in their mud fort of Ram Rauni at Amritsar. Nand Singh Sanghania, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jai Singh Kanhiya were among them. Mir Aziz laid siege to the fort. Jai Singh Kanhiya riding on a swift and spirited mare delivered many assaults on the besiegers by penetrating in their midst. Though he was attacked on all sides, yet he would return inside the fort safely.

Generally he worked in collaboration with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Jai Singh seized a part of Riyarki comprising the district of Gurdaspur and upper portions of Amritsar district. His first headquarter was located at Sohian, the village of his in-laws about 15 kms from Amritsar. Later on he shifted to Batala and then to Mukerian taken from Awans. His territory lay on both sides of rivers Beas and Ravi. He married his associate Haqiqat Singh's son Jaimal Singh to Sahib Kaur, daughter of Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala. He occasionally visited Patiala in order to solve some of its problems.

Qazi Nur Muhammad wrote in 1765 that Jai Singh Kanhiya had extended his territory upto Parol lying in the southern parts of Jammu, and that he worked in collaboration with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and that both shared the territory of Batala between themselves.

In 1774 Jai Singh built a Katra at Amritsar called Katra Kanhiyan. Jai Singh seized Gharota at the foothills. The hill chiefs of Nurpur, Datarpur and Siba became his tributaries.

The Jammu affair, 1774-84

About the middle of the eighteenth century Panjab became a cockpit of struggle among the Mughals, the Durranis, the Marathas and the Sikhs. Jammu situated 35 kms north of Sialkot on the right bank of a small river called Tavi was at this time ruled over by Raja Ranjit Dev, who was a great administrator, and absolutely impartial, treating Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, as well as Panjabis, Hindustanis, Jamwals and Kashmiris alike. Thousands of rich people, merchants, bankers, jewellers and Kashmiri shawlmakers flocked to this town. Jammu became Dar-ul-Aman or an abode of peace.

Unfortunately for the royal family and the people a quarrel broke out between Ranjit Dev and his eldest son Brij Raj Dev in 1774. As the latter was of bad character, the Raja wanted to nominate his younger son as his successor. Brij Raj Dev broke out in open rebellion. He

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invited Jai Singh Kanhiya and Charat Singh Sukarchakia to support his cause against his father. The Raja was obliged to seek assistance from Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh Bhangis to whom he was a tributary. In the course of fighting which had lasted for 22 days, Charat Singh died by the bursting of his own gun. His wife and only son Mahan Singh came to the battlefield to attend the funeral.

Jai Singh immediately declared Mahan Singh head of the Sukarchakia Misl. Finding himself incapable to face the Bhangis, Jai Singh resorted to a cunning device. He paid Rs. 4,000 to a sweeper who was a personal attendant of Jhanda Singh. One late evening Jhanda Singh was going to consult some of his chiefs, when he was shot dead by the sweeper from behind. This broke the heart of his brother Ganda Singh. He raised his camp and returned to Amritsar. Ranjit Dev bribed Jai Singh with a sum of one lakh and a quarter rupees. Before leaving Jammu, Mahan Singh, though a lad of ten, adopted a subtle trick. He offered to Brij Raj Dev to form a bond of lasting brotherhood. At a formal ceremony they exchanged turbans as a symbol of abiding fraternal union. Jai Singh came to Gujranwala and managed the affairs of the Sukarchakia Misl. He also arranged the marriage of Mahan Singh with the daughter of Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind.[1]

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Ganda Singh Bhangi won over Jai Singh's rival Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and fought several battles with Jai Singh Kanhiya. In the battle of Dinanagar Ganda Singh lost his life. In October, 1778, Jai Singh with the help of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia drove away Jassa Singh Ramgarhia to the desert region of Hansi and Hisar.

Ranjit Dev died in April, 1781. Brij Raj Dev succeeded him. Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh led an expedition to Jammu, and received a sum of three lakhs as a tribute. The entire sum was kept by Jai Singh. He instigated Haqiqat Singh to lead another plundering raid to Jammu as it was a very rich city. It lay almost defenceless, because the army and people were opposed to Brij Raj Dev. Haqiqat Singh thought that Mahan Singh might come to the help of his turban-exhanged-brother. He made an offer to Mahan Singh to attack Jammu jointly and divide the booty equally. Mahan Singh agreed. A plan was chalked out and the day of marching was fixed in January, 1784. Mahan Singh reached Jammu by a different route four days before the fixed

[1]Griffin in *Ranjit Singh*, p. 156, says that Mahan Singh was a tributary of Jai Singh Kanhiya.

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day. He plundered Jammu for three days and nights, killing thousands of men. The booty secured was worth more than a crore. When Haqiqat Singh reached Jammu on the fixed day, he found the town in flames and in ruins. This treachery shocked him so much that he died of grief on his return to Fatahgarh, his headquarters.

Kangra, 1783

The Kangra valley is about 130 kms long and 60 kms broad. It lies in the lower ranges of the Himalayas. Its average elevation is nearly 1,000 metres. It is watered by river Beas. The valley was parcelled out among Rajput princes belonging to Katoch family.

The Kangra town was known as Nagarkot. It is situated on the slopes of a hill on both sides of river Ban Ganga. The town contains the famous temple of Rajeshri Devi.

The fort of Kangra enjoyed great prestige. It lies about 50 metres above the Ban Ganga, near its confluence with river Beas. The fort is surrounded on three sides by steep and high precipices. It is a grand edifice of stone. The hill on which the fort stands is nearly 5 kms in circuit.

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In order to dominate the Kangra hills, the Mughal Government had appointed an officer who resided in the Kangra fort. He collected tributes from the Rajas and remitted it to Delhi. At this time the fort was held by Saif Ali Khan. During Ahmad Shah Durrani's invasions, Ghamand Chand Katoch[1] had risen to power. He was a tributary to the Durrani, on whose behalf he controlled the Kangra hills as well as the Jalandhar Doab. Ghamand Chand's son Tegh Chand paid tribute to Jai Singh Kanhiya. In 1782 his grandson, Raja Sansar Chand Katoch became anxious to secure possession of the fort. He attacked Saif Ali Khan a number of times, but could not make any impression on the qiladar. He invited Jai Singh Kanhiya to help him in getting possession of the fort. Jai Singh deputed his son Gurbakhsh Singh with Baghel Singh to Kangra. The three chiefs besieged the fort.

George Forster was passing by Kangra on March 29 1783. He says that the siege of the Kangra Fort by Raja Sansar Chand was going on. Two hundred Sikhs were also among the besiegers. Two

[1]The Katch Rajputs had been the rulers in the Kangra hills for more than two thousand years. Their pride is expressed in a proverb which means : "In the house of the Katoch the workman gets coarse flour, and the flatterer fine rice."

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Sikh horsemen met Forster on the road. Forster was in a caravan of iron merchants. The two Sikhs realized a sum of Rs. 100 from the iron merchants to give them a free passage. It was "accounted a large sum in these parts." The other travellers also "were laid under contribution." An "ass-driver" was deprived of his "pair of shoes." Then they seized a Kashmiri who was in the caravan. The Kashmiri was a clever man. He loudly shouted and cried out falsely that he was a servant of George Forster. The two horsemen approached Forster.

"Aware of the licentious manners of the disciples of Nanock, especially when employed in foreign service", Forster, to show respect to them, had dismounted and began leading his horse on foot. One of them looked into his face and declared that he appeared a barā ādmi (balla audimee). They let off the Kashmiri unmolested.[1]

A little distance ahead he came upon another body of the Sikhs. "A Sicque, a smart fellow, mounted on an active mare, touched me in passing. The high-mettled animal, whether in contempt of me or my horse, perhaps of both, attacked us fiercely from the rear, and in the assault, which was violent, the Sicque fell to the ground. The action having commenced on the top of a hill, he rolled with great rapidity to the bottom of it, and in his way down, left behind him his matchlock, sword, and turban so complete a derangement, I feared, would have irritated the whole Sicque body ; but on evincing the show of much sorrow for the disaster, and having assiduously assisted in investing the fallen horseman with his scattered appurtenances, I received general thanks."[2]

The direct road from Kangra to Jammu passed through Nadaun and Haripur. As both these places were dominated by the Sikhs, George Forster, in March, 1783, was obliged to follow another uncommon route for fear of the Sikhs who generally plundered all travellers.[3]

To revert to our story, Saif Ali Khan died when the siege was going on. His son Jiwan Khan took charge of defences. Gurbakhsh Singh suggested to Sansar Chand to offer temptations of cash and jagir to the young man for surrendering the fort to the Raja. When negotiations were completed, Gurbakhsh Singh secretly hinted trea-

[1]Forster, *Journey*, I, 256-57.
[2]ibid, 257-58.
[3]ibid, 258.

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chery on the part of the Raja, and offered a large sum of money on his own behalf to qiladar. On receiving the heavy bribe Jiwan Khan admitted the Sikh troops inside the fort to the sheer chagrin of the Raja. Gurbakhsh Singh established his authority over all the Kangra hills up to Palampur.

The battle of Rāndpura, February, 1785

The death of Haqiqat Singh was a great loss to Jai Singh. Besides Haqiqat Singh's son Jaimal Singh whom he had recently married to Sahib Kaur, daughter of Maharaja Amar Singh, instigated Jai Singh to acquire from Mahan Singh his share in the loot of Jammu. Jai Singh demanded from Mahan Singh half of the booty for Jaimal Singh, a part of which he wished to offer to the Durbar Sahib. Mahan Singh replied it was the fruit of his own labour, and he would not part with it. Jai Singh and Jaimal Singh began to plunder Mahan Singh's territory and laid waste the parganahs of Mansurpur and Mandiala. Afterwards they attacked Nakais who were Mahan Singh's allies, and seized Chunian, Dipalpur, and Raiwind from them. They also attacked Jandiala whose chief was attached to Mahan Singh.

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On the Diwali day in 1784 all the Sikh sardars gathered at Amritsar. Mahan Singh with a tray of sweets called on Jai Singh Kanhiya in his Katra. He was sitting on a cot. On seeing Mahan Singh he stretched himself covering all over and loudly shouting : "Be off, you bhagatia" (a dancing boy). Mahan Singh who was the richest Sikh sardar at the time took this insult to heart. He attacked the Kanhiya camp outside Amritsar. Jai Singh pursued him. A further engagement took place near Majitha, 20 kms from Amritsar. Jai Singh was forced to seek shelter inside the town, which was besieged. Jai Singh escaped into the Jalandhar Doab and collected a large army and stores of munitions. Mahan Singh could not face him single-handed. He retired to Gujranwala.

Mahan Singh invited Raja Sansar Chand Katoch and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, both enemies of Jai Singh, to join him. The response was immediate. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia left Tosham early in February, 1785 and encamped at Jagraon. Ramgarhia's enemy Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was dead. His successor Bhag Singh promised neutrality. Jai Singh sent a force to check Ramgarhia's advance. An engagement took place between them on the right bank of the Satluj in which the Kanhiya force was repulsed. Jassa Singh advanced and crossed river Beas without any difficulty.

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Raja Sansar Chand lay encamped at Dinanagar, 82 kms north of Amritsar. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Mahan Singh joined their forces in the neighbourhood of Amritsar. Amar Singh Bagga formerly a personal attendant of Jai Singh and a member of the Kanhiya misl deserted Jai Singh and united with Mahan Singh. They advanced towards Batala, 38 kms north of Amritsar. Jai Singh met the allies at Randpura village near Achal 13 kms away from Batala. It was a fiercely contested battle which lasted six hours. Jai Singh's eldest and ablest son Gurbakhsh Singh was struck by an arrow shot by a soldier of Guru Sundar Das of Jandiala and instantly killed him.[1] For a while the old man was paralysed with grief. The world became dark in his eyes. He threw away his sword, arrows and matchlock and shouted to his enemies that he should also be killed. Tara Singh and Jaimal Singh took him away from the field to a place of safety. Gurbakhsh Singh's widow, Sada Kaur, who was present in the battle-field escaped in disguise barefoot to her fort of Sohian, 3 kms from Majitha and 15 kms from Amritsar.

The battle of Naushahra, February, 1885

Jai Singh suddenly realized his mistake and made up his mind to fight the enemy. He retired from the battlefield and collected his troops and munitions. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Sansar Chand Katoch got busy in recovering their territories which Jai Singh had seized. Mahan Singh alone remained in the field. A battle was fought between Jai Singh and Mahan Singh at Naushahra. Many men lost their lives on both sides. Jai Singh was repulsed. He fled away to Nurpur accompanied by Tara Singh and Jaimal Singh. Mahan Singh pursued them. They entered the fort and started fighting. Mahan Singh soon realized that he had come a long way off from his base. He raised the siege and turned homeward. Sansar Chand received him in his camp at Dinanagar, and sought his help in recovering Kangra fort.

Jai Singh's territory was divided among four partners. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia recovered his lost territory. Sansar Chand seized Hajipur, Mukerian and the whole country lying at the foot of the hills. Amar Singh Bagga fully established himself at Sujanpur, 7 kms north-west of Pathankot, at the foot of the hills in the corner of the Bari Doab

[1]Jai Singh later on raised a monument over the remains of his son Gurbakhsh Singh at this place.

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below Nurpur. Mahan Singh seized Kanhiya territory worth three lakhs a year.

Sansar Chand

Raja Sansar Chand Katoch requested Mahan Singh to help him in getting back his fort of Kangra in return for a nazarana of two lakhs of rupees. Mahan Singh promised to send a force on his arrival at Gujranwala.

Meanwhile Sansar Chand besieged Jai Singh's fort of Atalgarh situated on the banks of river Beas, and held by his slave girl Dassar. This brave woman repulsed all the assaults of Sansar Chand. After four months' unsuccessful struggle Sansar Chand raised the siege.

By this time Mahan Singh sent a strong contingent of 1,000 men under his two commanders, Daya Ram and Muhammad Sālah. Along with Sansar Chand's men they besieged the fort of Kangra. The siege lasted six months. Mahan Singh's men ran short of money. Sansar Chand declined to pay anything before the fall of the fort. The two allies began to fight. Muhammad Sālah was killed in the engagement. Daya Ram returned to Gujranwala. Sansar Chand alone continued the siege. He realized that he had bleak chances to gain the fort in an open fight. He resorted to diplomacy. He sent a message to Jai Singh that both of them should join to fight Mahan Singh. Jai Singh accepted the proposal. When Jai Singh came out of the fort, Sansar Chand's men rushed in and after a short scuffle, the Raja seized the fort. Thus he paid the Kanhiya chief in the same coin. Jai Singh came to Atalgarh in sheer desperation.

Matrimonial alliance, 1786

Meanwhile the far-sighted Sada Kaur foresaw the rising fortunes of the Sukarchakia Misl. She made up her mind to get her only child, Mahtab Kaur, betrothed to Mahan Singh's only son, Ranjit Singh. She prevailed upon Jai Singh to approve of her proposal. Then she deputed Amar Singh Kingra to Mahan Singh to consider the overture. Sada Kaur learnt that Mahan Singh's wife, Raj Kaur, had gone to Jawalamukhi on a pilgrimage to pray for the recovery of Ranjit Singh from smallpox. She immediately went there and persuaded the lady to accept her proposal. Mahtab Kaur was married in 1786 to Ranjit Singh who was only six years old. When the Sukarchakia and Kanhiya Misls were allied through matrimony, Mahan Singh forced Sansar

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Chand to surrender all the Kanhiya territories situated at the foot of the hills to Jai Singh.

The Muslim leader of Batala, Ghulam Ghaus, was opposed to Jai Singh. He fled away to seek help from Timur Shah Durrani. On his way at Gujranwala he complained to Mahan Singh Sukarchakia against Jai Singh. Mahan Singh persuaded him not to proceed farther. He got Ghulam Ghaus restored to his position.

Jai Singh's death, 1793

Jai Singh died in 1793 at the age of 81. This date is given by Khushwaqt Rae, his contemporary. Some other writers have given different dates. Muhammad Hasan puts it in 1779 and Griffin in 1789. Massy[1], assigns 1793. Jai Singh's ablest son, Gurbakhsh Singh, was dead. It was a rare combination that Gurbakhsh Singh's wife was equally able, brave and clever.

By his second wife Jai Singh had two sons, Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh. Nidhan Singh lived at Hajipur and Bhag Singh at Sohian. His third wife, a Bhangi princess, seems to have had no issue. She got no share in the territory and property. The real control of the Kanhiya Misl passed into the hands of Sada Kaur who lived at Batala and Mukerian. The territories of the Misl were first divided into two parts, one half of which went to Sada Kaur. The two brothers further sub-divided their estates. In 1811 Ranjit Singh summoned Nidhan Singh to Lahore and imprisoned him. All his territory and property were seized forthwith. Ranjit Singh captured the whole state leaving ten villages to the family worth Rs. 6,000 a year.

Jai Singh was a brave soldier and good administrator. It is unfortunate that he practised the politics of the sword in getting rid of his rivals.

Notable Kanhiya Sardars

1. *Amar Singh Bagga* was a Mān Jat of village Bhaga in Amritsar district, and a personal servant to supply drinking water to Jai Singh Kanhiya (āftābchibāshi or gadwā bardār). He was assigned Bahrampur, Dharamkot, Palahi (18 villages), Sujanpur, and Sukalgarh. His son Bhag Singh founded Bhagowala estate in Batala parganah.

2. *Desa Singh* possessed 45 villages in the parganahs of Gharota (7 villages), Kontalpur, Mirthal and Surajpur.

3. *Gaja Singh Chashmawala* (wearer of spectacles) had eight villages worth Rs. 4,000 a year.

[1] II, 38.

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4. *Gulab Singh Dosira* (double-headed) owned Dinanagar.

5. *Haqiqat Singh, Jaimal Singh and Mahtab Singh :* Some writers call Haqiqat Singh brother of Jai Singh Kanhiya. Khushwaqt Rae calls him brother at one place and at another place says he was not Jai Singh's real brother. In fact they were cousins. Haqiqat Singh was a Sandhu Jat of village Julka near Kanha Kachha. Haqiqat Singh was in the beginning with Kapur Singh. Later on he joined Jai Singh. He founded a village near Chiryānwālā and named it Sangatpur. He built a fort there and called it Fatahgarh after his nephew Fatah Singh. He then shifted to Kalanaur where more than two hundred years ago Akbar had been enthroned.

Brij Raj Dev was the Raja of Jammu. He had entered into brotherhood with Mahan Singh Sukarchakia by exchanging turbans. With his help Brij Raj wanted to recover his parganah of Kāriānwālā from the Bhangis. He also invited help from Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya promising to pay him one lakh of rupees. Just about that time Jai Singh Kanhiya had married a Bhangi girl as his third wife. He tried to dissuade Haqiqat Singh from fighting against Bhangis. Haqiqat Singh was not prepared to lose a rich reward. He marched towards Jammu. Meanwhile Brij Raj had himself recovered Kāriānwālā. He declined to pay the stipulated money. Haqiqat Singh seized the parganah for himself. By that time Mahan Singh had also joined Brij Raj Dev. Both of them attacked Haqiqat Singh, but they were defeated. Mahan Singh made peace with Haqiqat Singh by paying him a sum of Rs. 50,000. Brij Raj paid him one lakh of rupees already promised and agreed to pay a tribute of Rs. 30,000 a year to Haqiqat Singh.

Haqiqat Singh demanded the tribute of Rs. 30,000 from Brij Raj Dev after six months. The Raja said that it would be paid at the end of the year. Haqiqat Singh made up his mind to plunder Jammu. He feared that Mahan Singh might come to help Brij Raj Dev again. He suggested to Mahan Singh to join him in sacking Jammu and divide the booty equally between themselves. It was decided that on a certain day Mahan Singh would march by the western route via Chaprār, while Haqiqat Singh would follow the eastern road via Zafarwal. The distance from both sides was almost equal. From Gujranwala to Jammu by the Chaprār route is 172 kms, and from Kalanaur to Jammu via Zafarwal is 180 kms Mahan Singh reached earlier. He threw off his bond of brotherhood to the winds and sacked Jammu thoroughly. The Raja fled away. Haqiqat Singh reached too late. He

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was so much shocked at Mahan Singh's treachery that he fell ill and died soon afterwards at Fatahgarh in 1784. He was succeeded by his only son Jaimal Singh, a boy eleven years old. He was married to the famous Patiala lady, Sahib Kaur. By another wife he had a daughter, Chand Kaur, who was married to Ranjit Singh's eldest son, Kharak Singh on 6 February, 1812. A few months later he died. His estates were annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Haqiqat Singh and Mahtab Singh were real brothers. Mahtab Singh's son was Fatah Singh. Jaimal Singh and Fatah Singh often quarrelled. Once Jaimal Singh was taken prisoner by Fatah Singh, and was shut up in the fort of Fatahgarh. Jaimal Singh's troops besieged Fatahgarh. The siege continued for four months without any success. Jaimal Singh's wife, Sahib Kaur, came from Patiala at the head of a strong contingent of troops. She spent money recklessly and fought hard. In one engagement Fatah Singh was killed. His territory was seized by Jaimal Singh. It belonged in common to Haqiqat Singh and Mahtab Singh. It consisted of Fatahgarh, Kalanaur, Malkhānwāla, Nunar, Sambrial, Sanba, Satrāh, Shakargarh and Sheranwali.

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6. *Kajal Randhawa* seized Khondah, Naushahra, Shahpur and Zafarwal worth two lakhs of rupees annually.
7. *Mirza Singh* possessed Ajnala, Bhiku, Bhori, Chak, Malkana, Rampur, Ratangarh, Saluwal, Uchak.
8. *Natha Singh* owned territory around Rangar Nangal near Batala.
9. *Sahib Singh* held Talwandi.
10. *Santokh Singh* enjoyed Dorangla.
11. *Sudha Singh Dodia* had Bhopalwala and Jāmke.
12. *Tara Singh* retained Kandi (26 villages) and Pathankot.

Territories

The territories of the Kanhiya Misl lay in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Kangra and Sialkot.

Jalandhar Doab

Atalgarh, Dasuya, Dharamkot, Hajipur, Mukerian, Nāg, Narot.

Bari Doab

Adalatgarh, Ajnala, Bahrampur, Batala, Bhagowala, Bhiku, Bhori, Bhugarh, Bianpur, Bura, Chainwala, Chak, Dalbo, Dehar, Desasinghwala, Dinanagar, Dorangla, Fatahgarh, Gharota (7 villages), Gilwali,

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Gurdaspur, Hara (16 villages), Jandi Chauntra, Jhabkara, Kahangarh, Kalanaur, Kandarwari, Kandi (26 villages), Kontalpur, Khatab, Khondah, Kot Haina (54 villages), Malkana, Mangalian, Matu, Mirthal Nangal Bhur (20 villages), Narot (65 villages) Nattar (18 villages), Naushahra, Palahi (18 villages), Panjgrain, Pathankot, Rae Chak, Rampur, Rangar Nangal, Ratangarh, Saluwal, Shahpur, Sohian, Sujanpur, Sukalgarh, Surajpur, Talwandi, Taragarh, Thoba, Uchak Kangra hills paid tribute.

Rachna Doab

Bhopalwala, Jāmke, Jhanda, Malkhanwala, Nunār, Sambrial, Satrāh, Shakargarh, Sheränwāli, Zafarwal. Jamnu, Jasrota and Sānba were tributary.

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CHAPTER 12

The Nakai Misl

The land

The Nakai Misl derived its name from Nākā meaning gateway. Naka was a tract of land lying between Lahore and Gugaira, and between rivers Satluj and Ravi. It was through this region that the highway from Kandhar, Baluchistan, Sind, Multan and Bahawalpur passed to Lahore and Delhi. Further, this region had a ridge which divided the Bari Doab into two parts. The southern portion was high and dry. The Nakai territory contained two parganahs on the Ravi, Sahiwal and Gugaira, and two parganahs on the Satluj, Dipalpur and Pakpattan.

Pakpattan or Ferry of the Pure, 208 kms from Lahore and 7 kms from the right bank of the Satluj is situated in the heart of this region. It was the seat of Baba Farid's successors. David Ross, in his book[1] writes: "Baba Farid is alleged to have been the head, if not the founder, of the Thaggs. He is one of their patron saints. Through the mystic agency of numerous Thagg bands he exercised great influence all over India, and brought about extraordinary occurrences. He is considered to have been more powerful than the emperor of Delhi. He converted the whole of the people of the Southern Punjab to Muhammadanism."

The People

The Nākā country was the home of the Jat clan, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Majority of them were Muslims and Sikhs. The important Muslim tribes were Kathias, Kharals and Wattus.[2] The Dipalpur

[1]*The Land of The Five Rivers and Sindh*, reprint 1970, pp. 112.

[2]The Wattus are a Bhatti clan of Rajputs. They were converted to Islam by Baba Farid. They are found on both the banks of river Satluj. They were addicted to cattle-lifting. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, reprint 1970, 145-46.

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Hindu Kambohs were considered by James Douie as much more hard-working than these semi-pastoral Jats.

The main settlements of Kharals were in the swampy jungles of Gugaira. They also owned about forty villages in the districts of Lahore and Shaikhupura. Griffin and Massy are of the view that the Kharals were a turbulent, savage and thievish tribe, impatient of control, delighting in strife and plunder. They were most fanatic tribe of Muslims. Mirza and Sahiban the subject of famous Panjab's love story, belonged to the Sāhi branch of Kharals. They were real cousins and fell violently in love with each other. The girl was being married to another young man, Khanazad. During nuptional ceremonies Mirza lifted Sahiban placed her on his mare and galloped off to Dhanabad. They were hotly pursued and were overtaken on the way. Mirza was slain on the spot, and Sahiban was strangled to death at home. After this incident the Kharals took to infanticide.

This region was also the home of the famous Sandhu Jats whom Griffin calls "notoriously brave." They had embraced Sikhism. About the middle of the eighteenth century two Sikh families rose to power in the same area with no relationship between them, except perpetual rivalry and hostility. One family established itself at Baharwal near Chunian, and the other at Sayyidwala near Kot Kamalia, about 170 kms away on the western side of river Ravi.

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Hira Singh Nakai of Baharwal

Hira Singh, a Sandhu Jat of village Baharwal near Chunian in Lahore district, was the son of Chaudhri Hemraj, headman of the village. Hira Singh was born about 1706. In 1731 he took pahul from Bhai Mani Singh and became a Sikh. He was greatly inspired by the adventurous life of the Sikhs, and took to the deeds of dash and daring. A number of young men of neighbouring villages joined him in his plundering raids, and he collected a lot of goods, and many cattle, camels and horses. The number of his followers increased day by day. When the Sikhs sacked Kasur in 1763 and conquered Sarhind in 1764, Hira Singh occupied Baharwal, Chunian, Dipalpur[1], Jambar,

[1]Dipalpur is situated 26 kms south of Okara or 166 kms from Lahore. In early medieval times it was the headquarter of a district fetching a revenue of 32 lakhs annually. At the time of Timur's invasion, it was considered next to Multan in importance. In those days it was spread over a large area. Babar mentions it as a large town as the sister city of Lahore. At present it is a square town with each side of about 500 metres.

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Jethupur, Kanganpur and Khudian. He established his headquarters at Chunian, 60 kms from Lahore on the road from Firozpur to Multan.

In 1767 Hira Singh decided to attack Pakpattan, partly to stop cow-slaughter and partly to check the raids of the Muslims of that place into Hindu and Sikh villages. (Massy, I, 390.) Shaikh Subhan Chishti held the holy shrine in his charge. He got the revenues of 80 villages attached to the shrine. The news of the intended attack had reached him. He invited the neighbouring Muslim tribes to come to his help. Thousands of men fully armed gathered there for Jehad. Hira Singh at the head of about 2,000 men marched upon Pakpattan. The Muslims opposed him at some distance from the town. Hira Singh was in the forefront. He was struck by a bullet in the head and expired instantly. His followers left the field. Shaikh Subhan's 4,000 men gave them a hot chase. Many men lost their lives on both sides. This battle was fought at a place called Bhuman Shah or Kuttewala on the banks of Sohag river.

Ran Singh Nakai

Hira Singh's son, Dal Singh, was a baby. He was succeeded by his cousin Nahar Singh son of his uncle Natha Singh. He was an ambitious leader. In 1768 he attacked Kot Kamalia, which was then the stronghold of the Kharal tribe. He was killed in the action.[1] His younger brother Ran Singh succeeded him.

Ran Singh proved himself the most powerful of the Nakai chiefs. He extended the possessions of his misl and raised its prestige considerably. He held the taluqas of Bucheke, Chhanga Manga, 69 kms from Lahore, Chhichha, Devsal, Fatahpur, Jethupur, at one time Kot Kamalia, Sharakpur, 5 kms to the west of the Ravi, and Shergarh. Though this misl was not so strong as several other Sikh confederacies, yet it commanded an annual revenue of nine lakhs, and a force of 2,000 horsemen with camel swivels and a few guns. Ran Singh's seat of government was at Baharwal.

Kamar Singh of Sayyidwala

The other branch of the Nakai Sikhs generally included in the Nakai misl was founded about the same time, 170 kms farther away from the first section, at Sayyidwala near Kot Kamalia. Kot Kamalia

[1]Gian Singh, III, 564, and Kanhiya Lal, 100, hold that Nahar Singh died of Thysis, nine months after his succession.

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is about 16 kms from the western bank of the Ravi and 225 kms from Lahore. It is believed that Alexander the Great was wounded while capturing the fortress of Kamalia. Its leader was Kamar Singh. His father was Chaudhri Mitha. It could not be ascertained from whom and when Kamar Singh took pahul. But undoubtedly he was a brave leader and he carved out for himself a strong principality at Sayyidwala, at a short distance from the right bank of the Ravi in the Rachna Doab.

Kamar Singh subdued the independent tribes living on both sides of the Ravi such as Kathias, Kharals and other robber clans. In the beginning they offered tough opposition. Whenever a force was sent against them, they retired into marshy lands and dense forests where they could not be easily pursued. Besides they were supported by the Sials of Jhang which was 65 kms north of Kot Kamalia. They were forced to settle down to a comparatively peaceful life. He divided his possessions into two districts, Satghara and Sayyidwala. To keep these lawless tribes under control he built five forts at Chichawatni (206 kms from Lahore), Dhaulri, Harappa (21 kms from Chichawatni), Kamalia, and Killianwala. He developed agriculture, and in this respect he is favourably compared with Diwan Sawan Mal.

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Kamar Singh was a great sardar. He conquered Kot Kamalia from Muhammad Yar Khan and Ahmad Yar Khan. The Kharal chiefs were given a taluqdari allowance, locally called Athog. It amounted to five pies or nearly three paise of today for each kharwar[1] of Nijkari or personal crops, and one rupee per kanal of zabti or government crops. Satghara which had been laid waste by the Sikhs on a former occasion, and abandoned by its inhabitants was rehabilitated by him. To protect Sayyidwala from the attacks of the neighbouring tribes he constructed a brick wall around it. This was in good condition at the close of the nineteenth century.

There was a perpetual warfare between Ran Singh and Kamar Singh. Ran Singh attacked Sayyidwala, but Kamar Singh bravely held his own against his rival. Luckily for Ran Singh, Kamar Singh met his death soon afterwards in 1780 in a brawl. Kamar Singh demanded tribute from an Upera Kharal zamindar and pressed him hard. One day Kamar Singh went on a visit to Rahna Moharan village. Upera Kharal called on Kamar Singh in that village. Discussion was prolonged. When Kamar Singh was left alone, one of

[1]Kharwar was of eighty kilograms.

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Upera's servants suddenly pounced upon Kamar Singh and cut off his head in the twinkling of an eye. Kamar Singh's men killed the assassin and the zamindar on the spot. When Kamar Singh's family was busy in mourning, Ran Singh fell upon Sayyidwala and captured it. Ran Singh passed away in 1781.

Wazir Singh

Kamar Singh's successor was his brother Wazir Singh. Ran Singh was succeeded by his eldest son Bhagwan Singh. Fierce fighting continued between them. Wazir Singh first recovered Sayyidwala and then captured a few villages of Bhagwan Singh. In 1783 a terrible famine broke out in Northern India. Their internecine warfare was stopped for some time. A member of the Nakai misl, Budh Singh out of compassion, sold all his property. He purchased grain, and gave away in charity a fixed quantity of it to every starving person without any consideration of caste, creed or religion. As a matter of fact a large part of his benevolence benefited the poor Muslims. It is not known to which branch Budh Singh belonged.

Meanwhile Hira Singh's son Dal Singh had come of age. He was married to the daughter of another Nakai sardar, Chatar Singh. On his father-in-law's death, Dal Singh demanded half of his estates from Chatar Singh's son, who was supported by Wazir Singh in rejecting Dal Singh's claim. This led to fighting in which Dal Singh lost his life. A servant of Dal Singh shot dead Wazir Singh in 1790. His family held itself upto 1798. In that year Shah Zaman of Kabul invaded Panjab and stayed at Lahore for a period. The Shah's relative, Muzaffar Khan, governor of Multan province, took advantage of Shah's presence in the Panjab. He swooped down upon Sayyidwala and expelled the Sikhs.

Bhagwan Singh

Bhagwan Singh was a weak man. It was with utmost difficulty that he could retain himself at the head of Baharwal house of Nakais. In early eighties Mahan Singh Sukarchakia had emerged as the most powerful sardar among the Sikhs. Bhagwan Singh attached himself to Mahan Singh for an annual tribute. Acute differences had arisen between Mahan Singh and Jai Singh Kanhiya. In order to tease Mahan Singh, in 1784 Jai Singh attacked Bhagwan Singh and seized several of his parganahs. Bhagwan Singh drew closer and closer to Mahan Singh. In due course he proposed the marriage of his sister

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Raj Kaur to Ranjit Singh. The marriage took place in 1798. In 1802 this lady gave birth to Kharak Singh. After this alliance Bhagwan Singh conquered Pakpattan from the Hans and recovered his villages which had been seized by Wazir Singh. In 1803 Ranjit Singh seized all the Nakai territories, and this misl came to an end.

This is the saddening story of the mutual warfare in the Nakai misl. These brave people failed to overcome their local prejudices and mutual jealousy. Even the tightening bond of religion could not unite the two branches. Had it not been so, the Nakais would have made great contribution to the peace and progress in that wild region.

Territories

Bari Doab

Baharwal, Bucheke, Chhanga Manga, Chhichha, Chunian, Devsal, Dhaulri, Dipalpur, Faridabad, Fatahpur, Gugaira, Harappa, Jambar, Jethupur, Kanganpur, Khudian, Pakpattan, Raiwind.

Rachna Doab

Chichawatni, Fatahabad, Killianwala, Kot Kamalia, Sahiwal, Sayyidwala, Sharakpur, Shergarh.

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CHAPTER 13

The Ramgarhia Misl

The first leader of this misl was Khushhal Singh Jat of Kakarpur village. He served under Banda Bahadur. Nand Singh Jat of Sanghni village about 20 kms from Amritsar succeeded him. The next leader was Jassa Singh Thokah or carpenter. As he had done the fortifications of Ramgarh fort at Amritsar, he was called Ramgarhia. Now the whole carpenter class calls itself Ramgarhia. They claim equality with the Jats in the matter of caste. Suraj Singh and Darbara Singh in the *Itihas Ramgarhian* write, "Tarkhan te Jat eko han."

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Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, 1723-1803

Jassa Singh's grandfather was Hardas of village Ichogil,[1] 20 kms east of Lahore. He served under Guru Gobind Singh. His son Bhagwan Singh accompanied Guru Gobind Singh to Nander and returned to the Panjab with Banda Bahadur. In the schism he followed Bawa Binod Singh, and took up service under Abdus Samad Khan, viceroy of the Panjab. It was at Lahore that Jassa Singh was born to him in 1723. His other sons were Tara Singh, Māli Singh, Khushhal Singh and Jai Singh. Bhagwan Singh was killed in Nadir Shah's battle of Lahore. His sons saved the life of Zakariya Khan in an attack upon him. The Khan Bahadur rewarded his sons with the grant of one village to each brother. They were Walla, Verka, Sultanwind, Tung and Chubhal. Jassa Singh held Walla with the rank of Risāldār, while other brothers were called Tumāndār.

[1]Gian Singh in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, III, 548, calls him a resident of Sayyid Beg village. Maybe he shifted to Ichogil later on. Some writers call his native place Sursing.

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In the service of Adina Beg Khan, 1740

During Nadir Shah's invasion the administration of Panjab had broken down, and complete confusion and chaos prevailed everywhere. The Sikhs took full advantage of the situation and collected a large booty. After Nadir's departure Zakariya Khan was restoring peace and order in the country. The Sikhs left Bari Doab and entered the Jalandhar Doab. Adina Beg Khan was the governor there. He was inclined towards the Sikhs. He wanted to use them as a means of his personal advancement. He did not take strong measures against them, and their disturbances continued in the villages lying at the foot of the Shivalik hills. Zakariya Khan deputed Jassa Singh to Jalandhar to prevail upon Adina Beg Khan to drive the Sikhs out of his territory and to advise the Sikhs to retire to Malwa. Adina Beg Khan finding him intelligent and clever and with influence at Lahore as well as with Sikhs desired to employ him. He wished to use him when necessary as a negotiator between him and the Sikhs. Jassa Singh preferred Jalandhar to Lahore. Zakariya Khan allowed him to stay there. According to Parem Singh Hoti Mardan the Sikhs also permitted him to accept service under Adina Beg Khan on the following considerations:

1. The severity in persecution of the Sikhs would grow less.
2. This would enable the Sikhs to regain some of their lost power.
3. They would remain in touch with the Government policy concerning them.
4. Whenever the Khalsa would require Jassa Singh with them, he would be recalled.

Jassa Singh commanded a company of 100 Sikhs and 60 Hindus.

Joined the Sikhs, 1747

On March 30, 1747, the Baisakhi day the Sikhs held a gurmata and decided that a fort should be built at Amritsar. It was a small, mud-built fort with an accommodation for 500 men. It was called Ram Rauni or God's shelter after the name of Guru Ram Das, the founder of Amritsar. In October, 1748, the Sikhs gathered at Amritsar to celebrate the festival of Diwali. The Sikh entry into this town had been banned by Muin-ul-Mulk, the viceroy of the Panjab. He marched upon the city. The Sikhs disappeared into the neighbouring jungle, while 500 of them took shelter inside Ram Rauni. Adina Beg was left in charge of the siege, which continued for four months, and daily skirmishes took place. During this period two hundred Sikhs

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lost their lives. The remaining Sikhs requested Jassa Singh to come to their rescue. Jassa Singh had been excommunicated from the Khalsa brotherhood for killing his daughter.[1] Jassa Singh left Adina Beg Khan and entered the fort in the night. It strengthened the perseverance of the besieged. At this time Kaura Mal was the Diwan of Lahore. He was a Khulāsā Sikh or believer in Guru Nanak. He and Adina Beg were jointly conducting the blockade. Jassa Singh sent a message to the Diwan to save the Sikhs from destruction. The Diwan advised Muin to raise the siege and grant a jagir to the Sikhs to keep them pacified. Adina Beg Khan who was upset at Jassa Singh's desertion, opposed the proposal. The viceroy accepted Kaura Mal's suggestion and raised the siege, but the fort was demolished.

In the Ramgarh fort, 1754, 1758

Muin-ul-Mulk died on November 3, 1753. After this complete anarchy prevailed in the country. The Sikhs decided to rebuild the Ram Rauni fort. Jassa Singh Thokah was assigned this duty. At the head of his contingent together with a large number of other Sikhs he set to work in right earnest. This time it was strongly constructed and was renamed Ramgarh (God's fort), or associating it with Guru Ram Das. Since then Jassa Singh came to be called Ramgarhia in appreciation of the work done by him.

In April, 1758, Adina Beg Khan became the governor of the Panjab. He could not tolerate the Sikh disturbances. Adina Beg Khan sent a strong force under Mir Aziz Bakhshi. He was also provided with 4,000 carpenters with steel hatchets and axes to clear away the forests in the neighbourhood of Amritsar where Sikhs used to seek shelter. The Sikhs took up refuge in their fort of Ramgarh. They believed that if they won they would go to heaven after death, and if they were killed in Guru's Kashi, their martyrdom would win them heaven. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jai Singh Kanhiya and Amar Singh Kingra were in the fort. Jai Singh made several sallies and sorties and killed a number of besiegers. After a couple of months the besiegers raised the siege.

In Riyarki, 1758

On the death of Adina Beg Khan in September, 1758, the Sikh sardars, generally heads of misls, began to take possession of villages

[1]Ratan Singh, 402 ; Gian Singh, 687.

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and to set themselves up as chieftains.

To strengthen their position two misls joined together. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Jai Singh Kanhiya worked in unison. They chose the fertile tract of Riyarki lying north of Amritsar upto the foot of the hills. Jassa Singh occupied Sri Hargobindpur, and Miani, and established his headquarters at Sri Hargobindpur.

Rift with Jai Singh Kanhiya, 1763

In the sack of Kasur in May, 1763, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia obtained a large quantity of gold, jewellery, pearls and diamonds. At night this treasure was buried in the jungle near Begowal. Later on he missed the place and lost it for ever. At this Bute Shah comments : "Māl-e-hrām būd, jā-e-harām raft." The Ramgarhias and Kanhiyas shared all their booty equally. On this occasion Jassa Singh tried to keep the whole lot for himself. As a result ill-feelings arose between them.

Qazi Nur Muhammad calls him a lion, 1765

Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the seventh time in the winter of 1764-65. During this campaign he was constantly harassed by the Sikhs. He advanced as far as Kunjpura and returned homeward from there. Upto this time the Sikhs had followed the guerilla method of fighting. But in 1765 they felt strong enough to have pitched battles in regular formation. Qazi Nur Muhammad who was present in the Abdali's army describes a number of engagements. A battle was fought on the western bank of the Satluj opposite Rupar. It was morning and the Afghan army had hardly gone 3 kms from the western bank of the Satluj when their advance-guard was attacked by the Sikhs. The Afghans immediately stopped marching and got into regular formation of battle. Ahmad Shah Abdali was in the centre with 6,000 choice soldiers. Shah Vali Khan, Jahan Khan, Shah Pasand Khan, Anzala Khan and others at the head of 12,000 troops were on the right. Nasir Khan with 12,000 Baluchis was on the left.

The Sikhs also organised themselves in a regular battle array. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia "fearlessly stood like a mountain" in the centre. Close by him was Jassa Singh "Thokah, looking like a lion in stature." The Qazi says that Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had his own flag and war drum.

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In the last Durrani campaign, 1767

In 1767 Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the eighth time. On his arrival the Bhangi chiefs evacuated Lahore. His commander-in-chief Jahan Khan attacked Amritsar. The Sikhs opposed him. After a fierce engagement lasting three hours Jahan Khan was driven away.

While Ahmad Shah was crossing river Beas, his passage was obstructed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. A fierce contest took place in which Ahluwalia was severely wounded. He retired into the Cis-Satluj region and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who had succeeded Hari Singh Bhangi in the headship of the Taruna Dal took command of the whole Dal Khalsa.

Subjugation of northern hills, 1770

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was in possession of the upper portions of the Bari and the Jalandhar Doabs adjacent to the Kangra hills. In the beginning of 1770 Jassa Singh led plundering expeditions into the hills. The hill people were poor, so he carried off their cattle. George Forster who travelled across these hills about a decade later states that the Sikhs also seized handsome and healthy boys for conversion to Sikhism and recruitment in their armies like the Janissaries of Turkey. Further, in those days the trade route from U.P. to Kashmir, Afghanistan and Central Asia had been shifted from the plains to these hills. The merchants and travellers were also plundered as it was actually seen by George Forster. The hill rajas could not resist the rising tide of the Sikhs, so they found safety in submission. Ghamand Chand Katoch, the most powerful hill raja, resisted him. Jassa Singh fought with him three times. In the first attempt he was defeated. He tried a second time in collaboration with Jai Singh Kanhiya. Both of them were repused. For the third time in 1770 in the battle of Talwara on the banks of river Beas he was successful. Raja Ghamand Chand and several other minor hill princes became tributary to Jassa Singh. He realized a tribute of about two lakhs of rupees from all the Kangra hill states. In order to keep them under his domination he built a fort at Talwara on the southern bank of the Beas, and stationed there his brother Mali Singh at the head of 4,000 horse.

The battle of Dinanagar, 1774

By this time the Sikhs had emerged victorious in their conflict with

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the Mughals and the Afghans. The Sikhs, men of the blade, could not sit still. Having none else to fight they indulged in internecine warfare among themselves. In the battle of Dinanagar in 1774, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia joined the Bhangi sardars against the united forces of Kanhiyas, Sukarchakias and Ahluwalias. After ten days of hard fighting the struggle ended in a draw.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia captured and released, 1775

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia one day in 1775 was going to Achal near Batala to attend a fair. From the opposite direction Mali Singh, brother of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, was coming at the head of a contingent of horse. Mali Singh attacked him. In the fight many men of the Ahluwalia chief lost their lives. Jassa Singh was wounded twice. He became unconscious and fell down from his horse. Mali Singh put him in a palanquin and took him to Sri Hargobindpur. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia would have been happy if the Ahluwalia sardar had been killed. Now he was in a fix. These grand old Sikh sardars had plenty of chivalry in them. He at once waited upon the Ahluwalia and with folded hands expressed his regret saying : "This has occurred on account of foolishness of Mali Singh. You should consider this place as your own home and excuse the guilt of Mali Singh." Jassa Singh Ahluwalia kept quiet and stayed there for two days. On the third day Jassa Singh Ramgarhia gave him a horse and a shawl by way of his offering at his departure, and under a proper escort sent him to Fatahabad, the seat of his government.

There Jai Singh Kanhiya, Gujar Singh Bhangi and others came to enquire after his health, and to incite him to retaliate upon the Ramgarhias. Jassa Singh said : "I will now take up arms to turn out the Ramgarhias from the country." Another writer says he had sworn "a mighty oath that he would never loose his turban till he had seized all the Ramgarhia estates."

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia then attacked Zahura which belonged to Ramgarhias. In the battle Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was wounded by a gunshot. He escaped from the fort, and Zahura fell to Ahluwalias. Jassa Singh gave it to Baghel Singh Karorasinghia to strengthen his party.

Expulsion of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, 1778

The possessions of Kanhiyas and Ramgarhias lay intermingled both in the upper Bari Doab and upper Jalandhar Doab. A quarrel arose

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between them over the division of revenues of certain territories. Jai Singh Kanhiya made a common cause with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had his headquarters at Sri Hargobindpur. His brother Mali Singh was at Batala. Tara Singh was at Kalanaur. Their families resided in village Begowal where they had constructed big mansions.

Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh, the Kanhiya sardars, supported by an Ahluwalia contingent attacked Sri Hargobindpur, about the close of September, 1778, and after a tough resistance expelled him. At the same time Batala was besieged by Jai Singh's son Gurbakhsh Singh. Ahmad Shah Batalvi who had a thorough knowledge of his home town says :

"Mala Singh was a tyrant and wicked person. He was given to evil ways. He plundered and dishonoured people. Wherever a beautiful woman came to his knowledge, he seized her by force and violence. His arrogance and haughtiness had reached such a state that while riding he shot down a person who cut his way in front of him. His officers and leading citizens of Batala including Raja Singh, Diwan Singh, Mansadhari Qanungo, the black Brahman Tara Chand, made a common cause and admitted Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya into the town, and Mala Singh fled away." Jassa Singh's brother Khushhal Singh was mortally wounded in this engagement, and he expired after a couple of days. Batala became the headquarters of the Kanhiya misl.

The victorious troops then marched upon Kalanaur held by Tara Singh. He was defeated and killed in the battle. Kalanaur became the headquarters of Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya.

Thus the allies wrested the whole country from the Ramgarhias. The three surviving Ramgarhia brothers made for the deserts of Hisar and Sirsa. Kanwar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia was at Mahtabkot near river Satluj. He was instructed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia not to molest the fleeing Ramgarhias and not to obstruct their passage on the Satluj. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia did not like to be encumbered with their families. The zamindars of Phagwara were tributary to him. They paid him one-fourth of their annual income. Jassa Singh left his families at Lekhpur to their care in charge of Ranjit Singh Ramgarhia, and himself left in search of lands and pastures anew.

In Hisar district, 1778

At the time of Jassa Singh's expulsion from the Panjab, Raja

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Amar Singh of Patiala was fighting with Bhattis in Sirsa—Bhatner region. Amar Singh offered Jassa Singh a daily allowance of Rs. 500 to help him in subjugating Bhattis. He offered asylum to Jassa Singh's son Jodh Singh at Patiala. At Sirsa Jassa Singh's men lost a couple of brass buckets while drawing water from a well, which was about a hundred feet deep. A metal piece containing a number of sharp curved hooks, fastened to a rope was thrown into the water to recover the buckets. One hook got struck up into some very heavy object. A man was let down into the bottom of the well. He discovered four iron boxes full of gold coins worth three or four lakhs. This enabled him to sustain his troops. The Bhattis were subdued. He set up his headquarter at Tosham about 10 kms from Bhiwani where he could find an easy shelter in the local hill. Besides, he could carry on his plundering raids into the Delhi region, not more than 130 kms from there. Hansi and Hisar were also reduced from this base.

In the Delhi Red Fort, 1783

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia extended his ravages up to the walls of Delhi. Early in March, 1783, he came to know that the Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was advancing upon Delhi. He joined it at Delhi on March 10, 1783. On March 11, the Dal Khalsa entered the royal palaces in the Red Fort. In the Diwan-e-Am the Sikhs placed Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the imperial throne and called him Badshah Singh. Though Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was in a minority, yet he challenged the Ahluwalia chief and called upon him to get down immediately. Both sides drew out swords, and were about to pounce upon each other when Jassa Singh Ahluwalia at once renounced the honour. Then the Sikhs ransacked the outer portions of the palaces. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia captured four guns, and a large variegated marble slab $6' \times 4' \times 3''$. It was later on deposited in the Ramgarhia Bunga at Amritsar where it still exists.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's opportunity, 1783

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia died in October, 1783. It was a favourable opportunity for him to recover his possessions. This he could not do all alone. He came to Patiala to see if he could get any help from that quarter. On November 4, 1783, Zain-ul-Abidin, grand-nephew of Delhi prime minister Najaf Khan, and himself Mir Bakhshi of the Mughal Empire, stated that Jassa Singh Thokah who had been expelled from his territories had gone back to the Panjab. Jassa

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Singh's plan did not succeed as Patiala itself was in a mess after the death of Raja Amar Singh in 1781. Besides one of the most devastating famines was prevailing in the whole of Northern India. The time was not opportune for such an undertaking.

In the Ganga Doab, January-February, 1784

Jassa Singh needed money to regain his lost territories. He turned to the Ganga Doab, the El Dorado of the Sikhs. He entrusted the state affairs to his son Jodh Singh and himself came to Shahabad Markanda where Karam Singh Nirmala (the spotless) joined him. Many other Sikhs also came, and their total strength rose to about 30,000. This alarmed the British general stationed at Bareilly. He wrote to the Governor-General to alert the British forces at various ghats on the Ganga to check the Sikhs from entering Rohilkhnad.

Jassa Singh and Karam Singh crossed the river Jamuna in the last week of January, 1784. They plundered Sarsāwā, 10 kms north-west of Saharanpur on January 30, 1784. Zabita Khan Rohilla despatched Qutbi Ranghar and Nahar Singh Gujar with a contingent of troops equipped with five guns to stop the Sikhs from entering his territory. Zabita's vakil visited the Sikh camp. Jassa Singh demanded Rs. 50,000 for sparing his master's country. Zabita Khan paid Rs. 10,000, and agreed to pay this amount as an annual tribute to Jassa Singh.

On 5 February they sacked Naula village. Their horses were let loose into the green crops of wheat, gram and mustard. Ravaging the districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Mirath, they reached Sardhana, the headquarters of Begam Samru. The Begam and her step-son Zafaryab Khan were in Delhi. Fearing a Sikh attack on the capital, the Emperor stopped them from leaving the city. Zafaryab was ordered to guard the Kashmiri Gate with two battalions and two guns. Articles of food became dear in Delhi. The rates were as follows per rupee : Wheat 10 seers, rice 11 seers, maize 11½ seers, māsh 20 seers, gram 11 seers, moth 10 seers, ghi 3 1/4 seers, mustard oil 5½ seers, sugar 6 seers, gur 8 seers. The Sikhs crossed the Jamuna at Barari Ghat and returned home. Jassa Singh came back to Tosham to deposit his booty. As the money gained was not sufficient to meet his requirements for the proposed Panjab expedition, he bided his time to find another opportunity to swell his coffers.

Sack of Chandausi, January, 1785

In the beginning of January, 1785, a strong Sikh force under Jassa

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Singh Ramgarhia, Baghel Singh Karorasinghia and Gurdit Singh of Ladwa passed over Jamuna. They plundered the villages and towns of Bārāh Sādāt. Zabita Khan did not stir out of his fort of Ghausgarh. They crossed the Ganga and entered Rohilkhand. On 13 January the villages of Barsi and Mahmudpur were laid waste. On 14 January, Chandausi, a great centre of about 2,000 bankers, jewellers and rich merchants was thoroughly squeezed, and booty worth a crore of rupees was obtained in two days and mights. The British Government sent a regiment with a park of artillery to drive them away. The Sikhs crossed the Ganga on 17 January, and marched along its western bank, while the British troops were moving opposite them on the eastern bank. Constant fire was exchanged between them. George Forster who was then at Lucknow wrote :

"The Sicque forces assembled again in the beginning of the year 1785, when they entered the province of Rohilcund, and having laid it waste, for the space of one hundred miles they returned unmolested."

Jassa Singh's recovery of his territories, February, 1785

Jassa Singh now turned his attention towards the Panjab. The time was opportune. He had plenty of money to recruit fresh troops and gather arms. Sharp differences had arisen between Jai Singh Kanhiya and Mahan Singh Sukarchakia over the booty of Jammu. Jai Singh had three great enemies. One was Raja Sansar Chand Katoch whom Jai Singh had deprived of the Kangra fort. The other was Jassa Singh Ramgarhia whose territories he had seized. The third was Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. His great supporter Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was dead. Mahan Singh invited both his enemies to recover their territories with his help. Jassa Singh hurried from Tosham at the head of his whole force, and stopped at Jagraon where Mahan Singh's agents met him to form the plan of action. Bhag Singh Ahluwalia promised not to obstruct him. A Kanhiya force tried to check the Ramgarhias, but failed. A hard battle was fought about the middle of February, 1785, near Achal, 13 kms from Batala. Jai Singh's eldest and ablest son, Gurbakhsh Singh, was killed in the engagement. Jassa Singh recovered his territories. Sansar Chand did not obtain possession of the Kangra fort for some time. He seized Jai Singh's territory lying at the foot of the hills. Some of the Kanhiya territory was annexed by Mahan Singh. Jai Singh was left with a few places including Kangra fort and Atalgarh near Mukerian. Jassa Singh established his headquarters at Batala.

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Offers asylum to Ghulam Qadir's mother and brother, 1788

In October, 1788, Ghulam Qadir, son of Zabita Khan and grandson of Najib-ud-daulah, blinded Emperor Shah Alam II, and committed horrible atrocities on the royal family. He was captured by Mahadji Sindhia and put to death on March 4, 1789. Ghulam Qadir's mother and her younger son, Bhambu Khan also called Mallu Khan by some writers escaped across the Jamuna into the Sikh territory. They were given shelter by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. He granted them five villages in jagir worth Rs. 7,000 a year in Banga parganah near Phagwara. Mahadji Sindhia, Nawab of Qudh and the British authorities tried to get them back, but Jassa Singh turned a deaf ear to their requests. In 1796 Imam-ud-din Husaini found Bhambu Khan living with Jassa Singh. It was after the death of Jassa Singh that Bhambu Khan joined the British Government in 1803.

Some Sikhs complained to Jassa Singh that Bhambu Khan did not deserve any consideration on account of his brother's oppression of the royal family. Jassa Singh replied that the Sikhs were also persecutors and plunderers of royal domains.

Māyān ham dar haqiqat duzdān-e-Bādshāhi hastem.

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The battle of Batala, 1787

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia having recovered his lost territory had set up his headquarters at Batala, which he fortified by a brick wall ten metres high and seven metres broad. Jai Singh Kanhiya was chafing under the loss of Batala. He won the support of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia and Bhag Singh Ahluwalia. Assisted by these two chiefs as well as by the Rajas of Chamba and Nurpur, Jai Singh attacked Batala. Jassa Singh shut himself up in the city, and with the active co-operation of the inhabitants foiled the efforts of the besiegers, who after an engagement of twenty-one days raised the siege.

Man Chand, youngest brother of Raja Sansar Chand, at the head of a force came to help Jassa Singh Ramgarhia against Jai Singh Kanhiya. Bhag Singh Ahluwalia advanced to check him. In a battle Man Chand was defeated and he fled away.

Offers help to Nawab of Rampur, 1794

In August, 1794, Faizullah Khan, the Nawab of Rampur, died. He left behind seven sons and three daughters. Muhammad Ali Khan, the eldest son, succeeded him. Ghulam Muhammad, the second son, got Muhammad Ali assassinated, and usurped the throne. His overlord

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was the Nawab of Oudh. He was willing to recognise Ghulam Muhammad for a pecuniary consideration, but the British Government decided to punish the regicide. Bhambu Khan offered the services of 30,000 Sikhs under Jassa Singh Ramgarhia for a certain sum of money. Ghulam Muhammad could not raise the requisite amount. The negotiations failed. A British force defeated the Nawab, and installed in office Ahmad Ali Khan, son of the deceased.

Siege of Miani, 1796

Sada Kaur was the widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya who had been killed in the battle with Jassa Singh. She was a very clever woman. She had married her only daughter to Ranjit Singh, son of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. She resolved to punish Jassa Singh. In 1796 she and Ranjit Singh besieged the Ramgarhia sardar in his fort of Miani situated on the banks of river Beas. The siege continued for four months. Jassa Singh ran short of provisions and munitions. Jassa Singh sent a messenger to Sahib Singh[1] Bedi of Una to seek his intervention. When the Ramgarhia messenger reached there, Jodh Singh Wazirabadia and Dal Singh Gill, representatives of Sada Kaur and Ranjit Singh were already with the Bedi. Sahib Singh advised them to raise the siege. Sada Kaur was adamant. Hard pressed Jassa Singh sent another ambassador to the Bedi. He replied: "They do not listen to me ; but God will help you." Sada Kaur's entire camp lay in the dry bed of the river below the fort. One night heavy rains fell in the hills. The river was flooded, and Sada Kaur's entire camp and equipage were swept away. She had to retire and Jassa Singh was saved.

Correspondence with the British, 1797

In 1797 Jassa Singh wrote a letter to Lumsdon, British Resident at Lucknow. He said he had heard a good deal in praise of the English, and he was anxious to enter into friendly correspondence with them. He was glad that Lumsdon had joined at Lucknow. Shah Zaman had

[1]Bedi Kala Dharia, descendant of Baba Nanak, lived at Dera Baba Nanak on the Ravi. During the days of Sikh persecution by the Mughal governors of Lahore, he migrated to the hills in Hoshiarpur district and settled at Una. Raja Ram Singh of Jaswan Dun granted him revenue-free land. His great grandson was Bedi Sahib Singh. He was held in high esteem by the Sikhs on account of his piety and religious devotion.

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recently invaded India. He came up to Lahore. The Khalsa offered a tough fight, and drove him away. If the British would support the Sikhs, their invasions could easily be ended. Rao Ghasi Ram, the bearer of the letter, would tell him all about the happenings on this side. He expected to hear from him in that connection.

The British Government records tell us that towards the close of the eighteenth century Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had established his summer headquarters at Nadaun in the Kangra hills at the head of 3,000 troops.

Benefactor of the oppressed and the afflicted

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was kind-hearted, sympathetic and helpful to all who approached him in their misfortune. A few instances are given here.

1. When he was at Tosham, a Brahman complained that his married daughter had been carried away by a Muslim officer of Hisar. A force was immediately despatched. The officer was killed, his property looted, and the girl was restored to her husband with a sum of Rs. 5,000 in order to assure her good treatment.

2. Najib-ud-daulah Rohilla was the dictator of Delhi from 1761 to 1770. He was a bitter enemy of Majha Sikhs. When his grandson Bhambu Khan with his mother fled away from Ghausgarh in the upper Ganga Doab to the Panjab, Jassa Singh gave them asylum. They were granted five villages in Banga parganah near Phagwara. They lived with him for fifteen years. He did not surrender them under pressure of the Mughal Emperor, Mahadji Sindhia, the Nawab of Oudh and the British Government.

3. Fatah Singh Ahluwalia seized the villages of Mehar Singh, Hazara Singh and Thakur Singh. They came to Jassa Singh who gave them a few villages for subsistence.

4. Gurdit Singh Bhangi, his mother Sukhān, and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's aunt Raj Kaur, were expelled from Amritsar by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Jassa Singh provided them with sufficient means for livelihood. Khushwaqt Rae met them when they were living with Jassa Singh.

5. Māi Lachhmi was driven out of Phagwara by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She had no means for livelihood (*Mohtāj-e-nān*). Jassa Singh fixed a handsome allowance for her.

In the words of Khushwaqt Rae "anybody expelled by the exalted (Ranjit Singh) came to him and received an allowance for his living.

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Khushwaqt Rae calls him "*bisyār ikhlāq pasand*" (very good natured). This must have offended the Maharaja, but he could not touch him during his early career, as Jassa Singh's army and resources were greater than those of Ranjit Singh.

Jassa Singh had killed several tigers with his sword. Once he was bitten by a cobra. He pressed the wound hard and squeezed out the poison. He said that only cowards suffered from poisonous effect. Jassa Singh was certainly one of half a dozen eminent Sikh leaders in the second half of the eighteenth century. The only blot on his character is the cruelty he committed on innocent people of U.P. for the sake of wealth, though the Sikhs scrupulously avoided raping women, unlike many others.

James Browne in 1786 estimated the military strength of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia at 3,000 horse and 1,000 foot. His territories in the Bari Doab yielded six lakhs and in the Jalandhar Doab ten lakhs. He died on April 20, 1803 at the age of eighty.

Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, 1803-1815

Jassa Singh had four brothers, Tara Singh, Mali Singh, Khushhal Singh and Jai Singh. All of them had died during his lifetime. Tara Singh's son was Diwan Singh. He took up service under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. On seeing Maharaja's policy of aggression against the Sikh chiefs he fled to Banaras. On his return after some time in 1808 he was imprisoned. He was set free on the personal surety of Baba Charhat Singh Bedi. Under pressure of the Bedi the Maharaja agreed to grant him a jagir in lieu of his annexed estates. Mahtab Singh, Gulab Singh and Sahib Singh were the sons of Khushhal Singh. Nothing is known about the descendants of other brothers.

Jassa Singh had two sons, Jodh Singh and Bir Singh. Jodh Singh subdued the hill rajas who had not paid tribute for some time. He raised the strength of his army to 10,000. His revenues amounted to nearly forty lakhs.

Ranjit Singh's policy was to win over powerful Sikh chiefs and use their military and financial resources in extending his kingdom by making further conquests. Ranjit Singh expressed a desire to establish the bond of brotherhood with Jodh Singh who made two conditions. Firstly, his family estates such as Batala, Kalanaur, Sanghurwala and Zahura, then with others, should be restored to him. Secondly, Gurdit Singh Bhangi and his mother driven away by the Maharaja from Amritsar and then living with him,

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should be granted some jagir to provide them a decent living. The Maharaja agreed. (*Sardar Bahadur manzūr kard.*)

Ranjit Singh took Jodh Singh to Amritsar. He drew up a document of friendly alliance. In the Hari Mandar before the holy Granth he took a solemn oath of lasting brotherhood with Jodh Singh. As Ranjit Singh was illiterate and could not sign, he placed on the document his open right hand palm dyed with saffron. Jodh Singh became his devoted and faithful ally and helped him in conquering several territories with his army and money. The Maharaja granted him the parganah of Ghumān which he had seized from Gulab Singh Khattar. He also conferred upon him eleven villages in Shaikhupura parganah. Though there was no understanding about the payment of tribute for these lands, yet the Maharaja extracted large sums from him as a friendly contribution to meet his vast expenses.

Bir Singh, the younger brother of Jodh Singh, attended the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The contemporary records reveal that on February 9, 1813, Bir Singh offered a tray of sweets by way of nazar to Ranjit Singh at Lahore.

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Baron Charles Hugel states that Jodh Singh joined Diwan Mohkam Chand in the expedition to Multan. As a mark of appreciation Ranjit Singh proposed an exchange of turbans with him. He declined saying it was a great favour of the Maharaja to allow him "to keep his own turban, and his head into the bargain."

Jodh Singh died on August 23, 1815. He left behind three sons, Diwan Singh, Hira Singh and Vir Singh. A dispute arose among them over the division of country and property. Maharaja Ranjit Singh met them at Nadaun and offered to mediate. They were kept under surveillance, and all their estates and property was seized. About 150 forts of the Ramgarhias were razed to the ground. The Ramgarhia Misl was brought to an end. Some grants were made for the subsistence of the three sardars.

Territories

The territories of the Ramgarhia misl lay intermingled with those of Kanhiya Misl in the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur in the Bari Doab and in the districts of Kangra and Hoshiarpur in the Jalandhar Doab. At the height of its power this misl could put into the field eight thousand fighting men.

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Jalandhar Doab

Akbarabad, Banga, Begowal, Dabwan, Dasuya, Dopāl, Gadalpur, Garhdiwala, Hajipur, Jhora, Lekhpur, Mahrala, Manakpur, Mang'a, Maniwal, Meghowal, Miani, Naya Nangal, Rahila, Sahri, Sarih, Sharif Chak, Talwara, Tanda, Urmur, Yahiyapur, Zahura. Revenues Rs. 10 lakhs.

1. A report of Adina Beg's time (1758) gave the following figures :

Parganahs in the Jalandhar Doab and their income

1. Akbarabad	Rs.	91,450
2. Bassyedudeal	Rs.	11,901
3. Dasuya	Rs.	2,21,000
4. Hajipur	Rs.	15,000
5. Miani	Rs.	11,501
6. Naya Nangal	Rs.	51,021
7. Rahimabad	Rs.	4,604
8. Sherpur	Rs.	7,000
9. Zahura	Rs.	41,101
Total	Rs.	4,54,578

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Bari Doab

Afghananwala, Batala, Danbala, Dinanagar, Ghuman, Gurdaspur, Halwara, Jandiala, Kalanaur, Khakowal, Mattewa, Qadian, Ramgarh fort at Amritsar, Sri Hargobindpur. Revenues Rs. 8 lakhs.

Kangra Hills

Thirteen Hindu states and one Muslim state of Shahpur Kandi paid an annual tribute of Rs. 2 lakhs.

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CHAPTER 14

The Sukarchakia Misl

Desu or Budha Singh

The founder of the Sukarchakia Misl was Desu, a Sansi Jat cultivator. He possessed 25 acres of land consisting of three ploughs and a well. On this land he had built a couple of houses for his family and cattle. The place was called Sukkaṛ Chak. Sukkaṛ means small and narrow, and Chak signifies a petty tract of land. On account of this he was called Sukkaṛchakia. It was situated near Gujranwala, 70 kms north of Lahore.

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Desu was a notorious cattle-lifter. Some of the animals he kept with him, and the rest were sold at Lahore and other places. Once Desu carried off all the good cattle and horses of village Nankhona. After a few days he met an old woman in the jungle. She enquired of Desu's whereabouts. She told him that Desu had taken away her buffaloe and a pair of oxen, and she was going to get them back. Desu replied that the robber was of very cruel nature, and he would maltreat her. She said that when he would know about her miserable condition, he would certainly have pity on her. The woman did not find Desu in the village, but on returning home she was surprised to find all her cattle tied up there safe and sound.

Desu had a mare known after him as Desi. It was well known in the country that Desu had swum across rivers Jehlam, Chenab and Ravi fifty times on that mare.

Desu heard of Guru Gobind Singh in old age. He wished to atone for his crimes and sins. He rode to Anandpur and took *charan pahul* from Guru Gobind Singh in 1692. After the establishment of the Khalsa in 1699, he again took *khande di pahul* from Guru Gobind Singh, and became Desu Singh. In those days Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa chiefly consisted of young men in their twenties. Desu Singh

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was over fifty, and he fought in Guru's battles bravely. So he was popularly called Budha Singh. Budha Singh also served under Banda Bahadur. It seems Budha Singh was killed in 1715 in the battle of Gurdas Nangal. He bore on his body 29 scars of sword cuts, 7 marks of bullet wounds and 7 spots of spears and arrows. On hearing the news of Budha Singh's death, his wife pierced a sharp dagger in her heart and became a true Sati.

Nodh Singh

Budha Singh had two sons, Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh. Nodh Singh remained with his father at Sukarchak. Chanda Singh settled at Sandhanwala in Sialkot district, and was called Sandhanwalia. Later on his sons migrated to Raja[1] Sansi, which became their permanent home. Nodh Singh was married in an influential Sansi Jat family of Gulab Singh at Majitha, 20 kms from Amritsar. This gave him a status, and he built a big house at Sukarchak with a spacious compound surrounded by a high mud wall. It was called Sukarchakia Garhi.

Nodh Singh served under Nawab Kapur Singh. In 1745 Nodh Singh was the leader of one of twenty-five bands of the Sikh *dharwis*. In 1748 at the formation of the Dal Khalsa Nodh Singh became the head of the Sukarchakia Misl.

Sultan Khan Chatha Pathan of Rasulnagar[2] captured six Sikhs, and converted them to Islam by forcing them to eat beef. Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh attacked Rasulnagar, plundered his property, brought back the Sikhs and baptised them again. Shahab-ud-din of Firozwala captured a few Sikhs of village Karyala, and had shaved

[1]Raja Sansi is situated on the Amritsar-Ajnala-Sialkot road 13 kms from Amritsar. It was the ancestral home of the Sandhanwalia chiefs, collaterals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It contained a huge residential building of the sardars, and a few large gardens round the village.

When a Sansi married a woman belonging to another tribe, all the Sansi women of the family dined with her in a ceremony. No other woman was admitted to this function. The newly-wedded woman had to observe all the customs and manners of her husband's family, yet she was called by her parental caste.

(*Amritsar District Gazetteer 1892-93, 17*; De Bourbel, 5; Rose, *Glossary*, III, 379; *Raūsa-e-Panjab*, 13.)

[2]Rasulnagar was founded about 1725 by Nur Muhammad, a Chatha Pathan chieftain, on the southern bank of river Chenab, 45 kms north-west of Gujranwala and 38 kms south-west of Wazirabad. It was later on renamed Ramnagar.

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their heads and beards. Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh pillaged his village and put Shahab-ud-din and his family to death.

In 1752 Kapur Singh was living in the Rohi region of Bhatinda-Hisar area. While plundering a Bhatti village Nodh Singh was killed. Kanhiya Lal says that Nodh Singh was carrying on love affair with his sister-in-law, Lālān, at Majitha and his brothers-in-law murdered him. This story is unacceptable. If he were really in love, he could have lawfully married a second wife. Besides the Sikhs in those days completely abstained from other women than their wives, otherwise in those wild days the history of the Sikhs would have been a story of unlimited rapes and sex violations.

Charat Singh Sukarchakia, 1729-1774

Nodh Singh was succeeded by his eldest son Charat Singh who was born in 1729. He served under Nawab Kapur Singh. He married the daughter of Amir Singh, a powerful sardar of Faizullahpuria misl. This chief possessed large territories in Gujranwala district including Gujraoli now known as Gujranwala situated on the high road from Lahore to Peshawar, 69 kms north of Lahore. This matrimonial alliance added greatly to Charat Singh's name and fame. He made Gujraoli the centre of his activities. He built a large mud fort for his residence. During Ahmad Shah Durrani's invasions he used to vacate this house and the Afghan noblemen would stay in it and called it Kachi Sarae. Day by day Charat Singh's power increased, and he was counted among the most notable Sikh sardars. His voice carried great weight in the *gurmatas* held at Amritsar on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali.

After the death of Nawab Kapur Singh he worked first in combination with Jai Singh Kanhiya. Charat Singh's vigorous character can be imagined from the fact that one dark evening in January, 1754, along with Jai Singh Kanhiya at the head of 500 horsemen he plundered the rich merchants and jewellers of Parimahal and Rangmahal inside Shah Almi Gate of Lahore.

Charat Singh built a brick fortress at Gujranwala in 1758. After the third battle of Panipat, Ahmad Shah Durrani sent his general Nur-ud-din to punish the Sikhs. He crossed the river Jehlam in August, 1761, at Khushab, and marched up the left bank of the river. He destroyed three largest towns of the Doab, Bhera, Miani and

[1]Baron Charles Hugel in 1836 also wrote it as Gurseraoli. *Travels*, 253, 357.

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Chak Sanu. The first two towns rose from the ruins afterwards, while the third remained deserted. Charat Singh along with other Sikh sardars checked his advance on the eastern bank of river Chenab. The Afghans, 12,000 in number, fled away to Sialkot, which was immediately invested by Charat Singh. Nur-ud-din escaped on the eighth day to Jammu in the disguise of a beggar. His troops surrendered, but were allowed to go in safety. This success made Charat Singh a front rank leader among the Sikh sardars. He also seized some guns and other arms.

Charat Singh's victory over Nur-ud-din deeply perturbed Khwajah Abed Khan, the Durrani's governor of Lahore. He decided to check the growing power of Charat Singh. Besides he wanted to impress upon his master, the Durrani Emperor, that he was quite active in discharging his duties. He invested Charat Singh's fort of Gujranwala in September, 1761. Charat Singh continued fighting from inside the fort. The other Sikh sardars, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Bhangi chiefs Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lahna Singh and Gujar Singh, Jai Singh Kanhiya, and Sobha Singh came for the relief of Charat Singh and encamped 6 kms away from Gujranwala. Khwajah Abed realized that he would be besieged and would soon be in the jaws of a nutcracker. In the night he took to flight without striking a blow. A number of swivels, pieces of cannon, horses, camels, etc., fell into the hands of the Sikhs.

In the beginning of January, 1762, Ahmad Shah Durrani came to the Panjab to inflict a crushing defeat on the Sikhs like that of the Marathas in the previous year. The Sikhs lay encamped at Kup near Malerkotla. Ahmad Shah suddenly pounced upon them on February 5, 1762, and killed about 25,000 Sikhs. On this occasion Charat Singh played a dominant role in opposing the enemy and in raising the spirit of the Sikhs.

In January, 1764, the Sikhs decided to punish Jani Khan and Mani Khan of Morindah as they had surrendered Mata Gujri and Guru Gobind Singh's two youngest sons to Wazir Khan of Sarhind. On this occasion Charat Singh posted his troops on the road to Sarhind to check any troops coming from that direction. He fought in the battle of Sarhind against Zain Khan, but took no territory as he had his eyes on the north-west Panjab.

Charat Singh took possession of parganahs of Gujranwala, Qila Didar Singh, Qila Mian Singh, Qila Sahib Singh covering the northern half of Gujranwala tahsil. He seized a number of villages around

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Alipur renamed Akalgarh. He also captured Shaikhupura *ilāqā*. He kept the fort of Rohtas in his possession for some time. Qazi Nur Muhammad wrote in 1765, "Chartu holds Rohtas in his jagir and this has grown into a city by his efforts."

Opposition to the Durrani, January, 1765

In December, 1764, Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the seventh time. He was joined by Nasir Khan Baluch with 12,000 Baluchi troops. He had brought with him Qazi Nur Muhammad to write an account of his master's deeds. The Qazi says that in a battle at Lahore Nasir Khan was opposed by Charat Singh Sukarchakia. Nasir Khan's horse was killed by a bullet. The fighting ended at nightfall when both sides retired to cook food and take rest. While Ahmad Shah was returning homeward, the Sikhs attacked the Durrani on the banks of river Satluj in a pitched battle. There too Charat Singh faced Nasir Khan. Nasir Khan came to a halt, and fought in a solid square. Charat Singh fegned retreat and took to flight. Nasir Khan was taken in. He pursued the Sikhs. When Nasir Khan had gone far away from the main army, the Sikhs turned back and fell upon the Khan who retreated slowly to the Durrani camp.

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Agreement between Charat Singh and Gujar Singh, 1765

Charat Singh made up his mind to extend his territory in the north-westerly direction. This part of the province was inhabited by warlike Muslim tribes. He did not like to face them single-handed. The Bhangi misl was the strongest of all. He decided to coalesce with it. In 1765 the Bhangi sardars conquered Lahore. He rushed to the provincial capital rather late, but secured the famous Zamzama gun as his share of the booty. Gujar Singh Bhangi was one of the triumvirate chiefs of Lahore. Charat Singh found him a good companion.

Both the chiefs made an agreement. The districts of Gujranwala and Shaikhupura were to be with Charat Singh. Sialkot and Gujrat fell to the share of Gujar Singh. Jehlam and Shahpur districts were to go to Charat Singh. Rawalpindi and Attock were assigned to Gujar Singh. While Hazara district fell into the orbit of Gujar Singh, Fatahjang on the road to Kohat was placed in the sphere of Charat Singh. The northern hill states lying between the Indus and the Chenab including Kashmir came within the range of Gujar Singh. The salt mines of Khewra and Pind Dadan Khan were left to Charat Singh. In all the three Doabs, Rachna, Chaj and Sind Sagar, the

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northern ring was to be occupied by Gujar Singh, and the southern parts by Charat Singh.

To maintain amicable relations between themselves, and to face the warlike tribes and the foreign invaders in common, Charat Singh gave away his daughter Raj Kaur in marriage to Gujar Singh's second son Sahib Singh. Charat Singh gave in dowry one hundred fine horses, a large quantity of ornaments and jewellery, numerous utensils of gold and one thousand suits of clothes (*tewar*), etc.

During the eighth invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani, 1766-67

Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India for the eighth time in the cold weather of 1766. On December 28, 1766 he lay encamped at Fatahabad, 32 kms south-east of Amritsar and 8 kms west of river Beas. The Sikh chiefs hovered around him at a distance of 20 to 30 kms. Charat Singh was at Amritsar. He decided to attack the baggage train of the Shah which was near Lahore. Along with some other sardars, Charat Singh marched away, fell upon it and plundered the bankers and merchants. The Shah's brother-in-law was in charge of royal harem with 4,000 troops. Finding it in danger from the Sikhs, he requested the Shah to send reinforcements. The Shah immediately returned to Lahore. The Sikhs fell back 30 kms away, and plundered all the baggage they could lay their hands on. The Sikhs constantly harassed the Shah and scornfully rejected all proposals of peace.

Conquest of Jehlam town, May, 1767

Jehlam town stood on the right bank of river Jehlam. There was no bridge over the river. A number of boats were kept on both sides to carry passengers across it. Its right bank was high and the left was low and flat. This was generally flooded in the rainy season. The town of Aurangabad was situated to the south of the river. It was one of the famous four mahāls. The town of Jehlam was an insignificant place then. Seventy years later Shahamat Ali counted fifty houses inside the walls and thirty outside the walls. The place was famous for timber. In those days trees were not cut down by carpenters in the upper regions of the river. On account of heavy rains they were pulled out from the roots and carried away by water to the main stream. In the passage they were shorn of their branches. In the rainy season and winter rains about one thousand trees, big and small, came floating down the river to Jehlam town in the year. Some of the trees were about twenty metres long or even more. Two such

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trees sufficed for the construction of a boat of about 300 quintals capacity. One log of wood of good quality cost 60 to 70 rupees. The timber from Jehlam floated down to Pind Dadan Khan, Miani, Bhera and Khushab. From Khushab it was sent to Multan. Bamboos were brought in boats from Chowakan, 50 kms above Jehlam.

In May, 1767, Charat Singh and Gujar Singh marched upon it. Its Gakhar chief fled away to the fort of Rohtas for shelter. Charat Singh gave charge of Jehlam town to Dādā Ram Singh.

Charat Singh imposed a duty of 10 per cent on the timber meant for local consumption. In course of time the Jehlam district yielded annual revenues amounting to about Rs. 38,000. This included Rs. 10,000 from transit duties, Rs. 10,000 from villages and Rs. 18,000 from the jagir of Sanguri.

Final conquest of Rohtas Fort

The fort of Rohtas was situated 10 kms from the right bank of river Jehlam and 17 kms north-west of Jehlam town in the hilly region on a rock. It was about 10 kms in circumference. It was high on three sides and low on the fourth. Its walls of solid masonry were in places 10 to 13 metres thick and 13 to 16 metres high. They had many bastions. It had 68 towers and 12 gates. The most imposing was the Sohal Gate, 23 metres high with exquisite balconies. It contained 350 houses with about 1,200 people, all Muslims. Mohan Lal counted 400 houses and 30 shops. It could provide living accommodation to 30,000 cavalry, and 50,000 infantry. It could mount 100 guns on its walls. For the supply of water it contained one tank to store rain water, three wells and two baolis. One baoli was 40 metres deep, and the well 45 metres deep. The well had a number of passages leading to the water, and one hundred persons could draw water at the same time. Sayyid Ghulam Husain, author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, says that the fort had lakes, pastures, meadows, arable land and woodland. Opposite to the fort there was a sarae. The fort commanded 67 villages spread over an area 18 kms to the south, 21 kms to the west and 24 kms to the north. On the east it was confined to its walls.

Ahmad Shah Durrani had appointed Sarfaraz Khan in charge of the fort. The Afghan garrison consisted of 3,000 men. There were few guns in the fort. Sarfaraz Khan planned to capture Gujrat from Gujar Singh Bhangi. The seizure of Jehlam was no problem. The Afghan scheme had leaked out. It appears that Charat Singh and Gujar Singh deputed Raja Himmat Khan, a popular leader in the

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area and Diwan Shiv Nath, leader of the Hindus of Gujrat, to Rohtas to dissuade the Durrani governor from executing his plan. It is also possible that they may have been asked to gather information about the actual military force in the fort and stores of ammunition and provisions. Both the leaders were put to death. Their companions were imprisoned.

Gujar Singh and Charat Singh realized that without the occupation of Rohtas they would not be able to put their project into operation. Both the sardars advanced upon Rohtas. Charat Singh had 500 horsemen and 1,000 infantry. Gujar Singh commanded 400 horsemen and 1,000 footmen. About 1,000 young men from the territories of both the chiefs joined them for adventure. A few pieces of cannon were also with them. The fort of Rohtas was besieged.

The few guns in the fort fired upon the Sikhs who stuck fast to their positions. The siege continued for five months. Food, fodder and even water ran short with the besieged. The villagers gave them no supplies for fear of Sikh retaliation.

No reinforcements had come from Kandhar. The Muslim chiefs realized that the Sikh domination could not be overthrown. Ali Muhammad of Gujar Khan and Sultan Khan Gakhar were in the fort. They opened a gate and admitted the Sikhs into the fort. The garrison submitted. Sarfaraz Khan was taken prisoner and was sent to Ramnagar. He was set free on paying a sum of Rs. 78,000. Raja Ghias-ud-din, son of Himmat Khan, was appointed governor of Rohtas fort. On his death after a couple of years his cousin, Nur Khan, got this office. He held the post of the governor for thirty years. Faizdad Khan succeeded him. In 1808 Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave charge of the fort to a Sikh. Faizdad Khan's family was allowed one-fourth of the revenues on account of their loyal services. Five years later the share was converted into a jagir worth Rs. 5,000 annually.

Other territories occupied by Charat Singh, 1767-1773

After his conquest of Jehlam and Rohtas Charat Singh seized Chakwal, Jalalpur, Rasulpur, and received nazarana from Sahib Khan Khokhar, chief of Pind Dadan Khan. There he constructed a fort which was entrusted to Budh Singh and Gaur Singh. He also captured the towns of Kot Sahib Khan and Raja Ka Kot. He then turned towards south-west to seize the central parts of the Chaj and Sind Sagar Doab. Awans and Janjuas dominated the southern portions of

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the Cis-Indus-Salt Range. In its western and central parts they were the dominant race.

The Awans

The Awans were numerous in Shahpur, Leiah and Kalabagh. They were most prevalent in the Mianwali—Salt Range tract. The chief of Kala Bagh was the head of the tribe. The main sources of his income were the salt mine, extensive alum works, and the Indus ferry which was below the town. Here the Indus entered the plains. Their strongholds in Shahpur district were at Jalar, Naushahra and Sakesar ; in the Jehlam district at Awankāri ; in Rawalpindi district at Bugdial, Chihan, Jand and Sarwala ; and in Attock district at Shamsabad.

Thomson describes the Awans as "frank and pleasing in their manners, but vindictive, violent, and given to faction ; strong and broad shouldered, but not tall ; strenuous but slovenly cultivators ; and essentially a peasant race."

The salt mines proved a great source of income to Charat Singh. The Salt Range consists of a series of hills lying between rivers Indus and Jehlam. It is known to contain the largest deposits of rock salt in the world. There were several mines out of which salt was extracted. The biggest mine was at Khewra, 8 kms from Pind Dadan Khan in Jehlam district. The others were at Nurpur in Jehlam district, at Warcha in Shahpur district, and at Kalabagh in Mianwali district. The mineral exists in vertical layers. The hills are nearly 400 metres high from the valley of river Jehlam and about 8 kms in breadth. The salt is of red and white colour. At places it exists in brilliant crystal colour. The mines were worked for nine or ten months in the year except the rainy season. About one hundred men were generally at work. Each was paid one rupee for bringing 8 quintals of salt to the surface. This could be done by him in five days. In those days generally one thousand quintals of salt could be extracted daily. It was sold at the mine for five rupees a quintal.

The Janjuas

The Janjuas like Chibs and Gakhars were addressed as Raja. At one time they ruled over a large area between Rawalpindi and Multan. Thomson in his Jehlam report describes them as "physically well looking, with fine hands and feet, much given to military service, especially in the cavalry ; poor agriculturists, bad men of business, and with great pride of race." Their important centres of population

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were at Badshahpur, Baghanwala, Bakhdum, Chakri, Choha, Dalwal, Dariala, Deh Chuhar, Dhandot, Garjukh, Ghumbi, Jani, Kals, Katora, Khawala, Khewra, Kotli Sayyidan, Kot Umar, Kulwala, Lahar, Makach, Makshala, Malot, Nāra, Natal, Nathial, Pindi Khokhar, Pir Chak, Saidanshah, Sayyidpur, Sherpur, Sulori, Vahali, Wagah, Warand, Watli.

The Ghebas

The Ghebas inhabited the wild hilly tract lying between the Indus and the Sohan river in the western half of Fatahjang tahsil and Pindi Gheb. They bravely held their own against Awans, Gakhars and Jodras. As they were away from the main highway, and their country was difficult of access, they were not conquered by the Afghans. They offered a small tribute of a horse, or a few head of cattle to the invader, and saved themselves from an attack.

Colonel Cracroft says that the Ghebas are "a fine, hardy race of men, full of fire and energy, not addicted to crime, though their readiness to resent insult or injury, real or imagined, or to join in hand-to-hand fights for their rights in land, and their factions with the Jodra and Alpial are notorious."

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Charat Singh then overran the southern part of Rawalpindi. Rae Jalal, the Gheba chief, was made tributary. He was left one-fourth of the revenue called *Chaharam* in consideration of his proprietary right in the land. But Charat Singh's authority was nominal. He received a certain amount from him when he was strong enough to get it. The Sikh kārdārs never gained full power in Gheba country. Charat Singh farmed the Sil *ilāqā* to the Raes of Kot and Maliks of Pindi Gheb.

The Alpials

The Alpials inhabited the country on the banks of Sohān and in the southern part of Fatahjang parganah. They were Manj Rajputs, bold, brave, lawless and much given to violent crime. Their stronghold was at Chakri. They made only nominal submission to Charat Singh.

The Bhandials

The Bhandials were a branch of Ghebas. Like the Raes of Kot and Maliks of Pindi Gheb, they were allowed *Chaharam* or one-fourth of the revenue of their villages.

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The Jodras

The Jodras were close neighbours of Ghebas with whom they intermarried. They inhabited the eastern half of Pindi Gheb parganah stretching along the eastern bank of river Indus from Mirzapur to within 20 kms of Attock. They possessed Balagheb, Nala, Sil, Sohān and Talagang. They paid a very small tribute of a horse and a hawk to Charat Singh. Colonel Cracroft describes the Jodras as "fine, spirited fellows who delight in field sports, have horses and hawks, are often brawlers, and are ever ready to turn out and fight out their grievances." Charat Singh did not fully subdue them.

The Sagri Pathans of Makhad

The Sagri Pathans of Makhad paid to the Durrani kings eighty fat-tailed sheep as their annual tribute. Charat Singh left one-eighth of the revenue as an allowance to their chief from gold washings in river Indus and the tolls levied at the Makhad ferry.

Dalel Khan, the chief of Isa Khel, offered submission to Charat Singh only in name.

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CHARAT SINGH'S KARDARS

Rachna Doab

1. Dal Singh Gil was appointed kardar of Ahmadabad and Jamke with his office at Ahmadabad.
2. Bhag Singh Virk of Karyal village in Gujranwala district had occupied about 100 villages in the south-west of Gujranwala and in the south-east of Hafizabad. He was confirmed as jagirdar and kardar by Charat Singh with his headquarters at Miraliwala.

Chaj Doab

1. Budh Singh and Gaur Singh were entrusted with Pind Dadan Khan.
2. Dharam Singh Batāsā or Tabāsā was given Miani, and Shamsabad with headquarters at Miani.
3. Tahal Singh Chhāchhi was appointed *thanadar* of Salt mines at Qila Dalor.
4. Nirmal Singh was given charge of Kunjah.
5. Kalra and Kauthala were assigned to Himmat Singh.

Sind Sagar Doab

1. Dada Ram Singh was appointed Kārdar of Jehlam.

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2. Sahaj Singh was entrusted with Dhani-Gheb and Pothohār.

Baron Charles Hugel says that Charat Singh's territories brought him an income of 300,000 florins annually.

Charat Singh's matrimonial alliances

Charat Singh strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances.

1. Dal Singh Kalianwala of Alipur renamed Akālgarh was married to the sister of Charat Singh.

2. Sohel Singh Bhangi was married to the daughter of Charat Singh.

3. Sahib Singh Bhangi, son of Gujar Singh, was married to another daughter, Raj Kaur.

4. His son Mahan Singh was married to the daughter of Jai Singh Mān.

To establish a prominent place for himself among the Sikhs Charat Singh built a fort at Amritsar to the north of the city.

Death at Udhochak, 1774

A quarrel broke out between Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu and his eldest son Brij Raj Dev over the question of succession. The imprudent young man declared war upon his father and invited help from Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh Kanhiya. The Raja secured assistance from Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh Bhangis. The opposing Sikh forces while marching to Jammu came to blows near village Wāso Sohawa at Udhochak on the banks of Basantar stream in Zafarwal parganah. The Raja and his son joined their parties at this place. Fighting continued for a few days and no party could establish its superiority. Unluckily one day Charat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own gun. Charat Singh was then forty-five years old. His wife Desan and son Mahan Singh came from Gujranwala to attend the funeral. She prevailed upon Jai Singh to get Jhanda Singh murdered. Jai Singh heavily bribed Jhanda Singh's personal servant who shot dead his master. These two deaths broke the heart of all the four parties. Ranjit Dev confirmed his son as the next ruler. He paid one lakh and a quarter to Jai Singh, offering nothing to his supporters. The grief-stricken Sikhs returned home.

Some of Charat Singh's chiefs thought that the Sukarchakia Misl would come to an end. They decided to join Ganda Singh, head of the Bhangi Misl. Dharam Singh was the first to rebel. Desān suppressed his revolt before any succour could come to the rebel from.

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Bhangis. This success alarmed the other sardars who were about to follow the example of Dharam Singh.

MAHAN SINGH SUKARCHAKIA, 1774-1790

Charat Singh was succeeded by his 10 year-old son Mahan Singh, born in 1764.[1] He inherited a large territory. His step-mother, Desān, managed the state affairs with the help of Jai Ram Brahman. Jai Singh Kanhiya, a close friend of Charat Singh, became foster father of young Mahan Singh. Mahan Singh had already been married by Charat Singh to the daughter of Jai Singh Mān. To strengthen Mahan Singh's position Jai Singh arranged Mahan Singh's second marriage with Raj Kaur daughter of Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind in 1774.[2]

In 1779 at the age of 15 Mahan Singh took the control of his misl in his own hands. He was the most ambitious lad. The passage of Bhangi troops from Amritsar and Lahore, their headquarters, to their possessions in the north-west at Gujrat and Rawalpindi lay through the Sukarchakia territory. This galled Mahan Singh. He was keen to bring the whole of north-west Panjab under him. He therefore resolved to oust the Bhangis through diplomacy and force. He entrusted the civil administration of his estates to Diwan Sobha Ram who looked after the income and judicial cases, and to Diwan Daya Ram who was made in charge of expenditure. Being thus free from home affairs he devoted all his energy to the expansion of his dominions as well as accumulation of wealth in any way fair or foul.

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Dissension at Gujrat

Mahan Singh first of all applied his diplomatic skill at Gujrat, a stronghold of Bhangis. It was under Gujar Singh. As he was always on the move, he had entrusted the administration to his second son Sahib Singh who was married to Mahan Singh's sister, Raj Kaur. But all the officers had been appointed by Gujar Singh, and they carried out his instructions. Sahib Singh wished that his orders should be implicitly obeyed. He therefore wanted to be independent. Mahan Singh encouraged him. Sahib Singh revolt against his father. He expelled Gujar Singh's officers and appointed his own men in their

[1]Kartar Singh Kalāswalia in his *Tegh Khalsa*, p. 279, says that Charat Singh had two sons, Mahan Singh and Sahaj Singh. This is also supported by Hugel, p. 359.

[2]Griffin in his *Ranjit Singh*, p. 155, places this marriage in 1774.

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places. When Gujar Singh came to Gujrat, Sahib Singh attacked his father's troops. Fighting began between father and son. Mahan Singh intervened and patched up a temporary peace. Gujar Singh resumed control of his territories. Only Sodhra was left with Sahib Singh in independent charge.

The Chathas

Another thorn in the side of Mahan Singh which pricked him hard was the Chatha Pathans of Rasulnagar. They were a numerous Muslim tribe inhabiting Hafizabad and Wazirabad parganahs. They held 78 villages. Their main strongholds were along river Chenab at Bangli, Ghudhi Gul Muhammad, Manchar, Nadālā, Pandorian and Rasulnagar (later Ramnagar). At the time of Charat Singh the Chatha brothers were founding new townships. Ahmad Khan founded Ahmadnagar. Pir Muhammad built forts at Naiwala, Kot Pir Muhammad, and Fatahpur. Ali Muhammad established Alipur, later called Akalgarh, Kot Ali Muhammad and Kot Salim. Sayyid Muhammad founded Sayyidnagar. Mian Khan built Kot Mian Khan.

Rasulnagar was founded by Muhammad Khan Chatha in the first quarter of eighteenth century. He named it after his precept Pir Abdur Rasul. It lay near the ruins of Būchā town, the birth place of the celebrated Panjabi poet Waris Shah. His Si Harfi, a verse of thirty letters is on the tongue of every lover of Panjabi language. Rasulnagar was situated on the southern bank of river Chenab, 45 kms north-west of Gujranwala and 38 kms south-west of Wazirabad. Muhammad Khan's son Sultan Khan had converted six Sikhs forcibly to Islam. In Charat Singh's absence Ahmad Khan had carried off the Zamzama gun from Gujranwala to Rasulnagar. Even then Charat Singh took no action against him. Perhaps he thought that in view of his wide conquests the Chathas would give in of their own accord.

The gun proved the ruin of the family. In due course Pir Muhammad coveted it. Ahmad Khan strongly resisted the demand. Both the brothers, most probably from different mothers, resolved to fight. Ahmad Khan's two sons, Bahram Khan and Qadir Bakhsh, and Pir Muhammad's son Fatah Muhammad lost their lives. The gun remained with Ahmad Khan.

At this juncture Mahan Singh jumped into the affray just to fish in troubled waters. He besieged Pir Muhammad in his fort of Kot Pir Muhammad. The siege lasted for four months, but Mahan Singh could not make any impression on the Chatha chief. He then resorte d

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to a cunning device. On a leaf of the holy Granth he gave a solemn assurance, of allowing Pir Muhammad to retire from the fort unmolested, and affixed his seal to it. Pir Muhammad Khan opened the gates of the fort. He was immediately arrested, and the fort and the town were thoroughly sacked. Mahan Singh then captured the fort of Sayyidnagar.

Now Mahan Singh demanded Zamzama gun from Ahmad Khan. On his refusal he besieged Rasulnagar. Being hard-pressed Ahmad Khan escaped into Gujar Singh's camp nearby. Mahan Singh demanded his surrender, but Gujar Singh gave a flat refusal. Sahib Singh secretly surrendered him to Mahan Singh who put Ahmad Khan to death. Rasulnagar now became Ramnagar. At the fall of Rasulnagar Mahan Singh received the news of the birth of Ranjit Singh on 13 November, 1780. Mahan Singh was then 16 years old, and Raj Kaur may be one year younger.

In 1789 Mahan Singh besieged Manchar then under Ghulam Muhammad Khan Chatha. Griffin[1] says that Mahan Singh was defeated. The siege continued and it lasted for more than six months. In the absence of Mahan Singh, his son Ranjit Singh, then nine years old, was conducting the operations. Hashmat Khan, uncle of Ghulam Muhammad Khan, climbed up Ranjit's elephant. He was about to strike at the child when his attendants pushed him down. Reduced to extremity, Ghulam Muhammad offered to surrender in return for safe exit. Solemn assurance was given on the holy Granth. No sooner was he out than he was shot dead. Manchar was immediately occupied. The following saying became popular at this time: "Mahan Singh Manchar Mārya hath Pothi pharke." Ghulam Muhammad's son Jan Muhammad escaped to Kabul, and came back to the Panjab in the train of Shah Zaman. During the Shah's presence he recovered his territory. On Shah's return to Afghanistan, Ranjit Singh attacked Rasulnagar. Jan Muhammad was killed.

Khushab

Sher Khan Tiwana founded Mitha Tiwana about 1745. He died in 1767. His son was Khan Muhammad. Lal Khan was the chief of Khushab[2], 24 kms from Mitha Tiwana, seat of the chief. Khan Muhammad went on a visit to Khushab. He came to know that Lal

[1] *Panjab Chiefs*, II, 42.
[2] Khushab means delicious water.

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Khan's son Jafar Khan was plotting to capture him. Khan Muhammad hastily returned home, and prepared to fight Lal Khan. Lal Khan, with his wife Nurbhari and younger son Hakim Khan, came to Mitha Tiwana to assure Khan Muhammad of their innocence. They were arrested and Khushab was attacked. Jafar Khan sought help from Mahan Singh Sukarchakia. Mahan Singh came with a large force, and compelled the Tiwana chief to retire. Khan Muhammad killed his prisoners.

Sahiwal

Muhammad Khan was the chief of Sahiwal. Jhanda Singh Bhangi attacked him about 1770, and seized a portion of his country. Muhammad Khan was killed while fighting. The Sahiwal chiefs did not fuily submit to Bhangi sardars. Some time afterwards Mahan Singh Sukarchakia made Sahiwal tributary to him.

Dalwal and Darapur

Dalwal in the Salt Range was under Janjuas. Their fortified place was at Nila Makrachh. Mahan Singh gave them an allowance of one-tenth of their total revenues of the Kahun parganah. Mahan Singh subdued the Janjua chief of Darapur and forced him to take up service in his army.

Pindigheb and Talagang

This region under the domination of Ghebas was entrusted to Malik Amanat Khan for Rs. 6,900 annually.

Capture of Bhangi territories

Chait Singh, youngest brother of Gujar Singh, had come to help the Chathas. Mahan Singh arrested him and imprisoned him in the fort of Gujranwala. Raj Kaur, sister of Mahan Singh and wife of Sahib Singh, came from Gujrat to Gujranwala to secure liberation of Chait Singh. Mahan Singh did not listen to her, and did not set the Bhangi sardar free.

Mahan Singh then turned towards Bhangi territories. He captured Sahiwal and imprisoned its qiladar. He seized Pindi Bhattian, Isa Khel and Musa Khel. He killed Desa Singh of Chiniot in 1782. Karam Singh Dulu held his own successfully at Jhang.

In 1777, Mahan Singh entered the Sialkot district, almost the whole of which belonged to Bhangis. First of all he attacked Kotli

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Loharan, famous for the manufacture of arms. He obtained match-locks in tribute. He stayed in the district for two months. He invited all the Bhangi chiefs to meet him on a fixed day at a certain place. Twenty-two of them responded to his call. They were imprisoned. They were set free on acknowledgement of his overlordship and payment of tribute. Mahan Singh failed to capture Sialkot, as it was bravely defended by Charat Singh Bajwa of Badhala village and Mansa Singh and Rupa Singh. Mahan Singh's two months' siege proved fairly satisfactory.

In 1783 Panjab was passing through a most critical period. For three years past not a drop of rain had fallen, and one of the severest famines had broken out in northern India. *Ādām ādām rā me khurd, wa mādar bachchān ra firo me burd. Jahāne talaf shud.* Mahan Singh distributed a handful of grain to everybody who approached him.

Mahan Singh's first sack of Jammu, January, 1784

For his ambitious plan to consolidate himself in the possession of north-west Panjab by expelling the Bhangis and by subduing the independent and refractory Muslim chiefs, Mahan Singh needed money. It was not available anywhere in the Panjab as all the villages and towns had been reduced to poverty by the foreign invaders, government officials, the Sikhs and predatory tribes. In the whole of northern India Jammu city alone was prosperous. It was due to Ranjit Dev who had established perfect peace there. Thousands of rich merchants, bankers and nobles had settled there. His greedy eyes turned towards it for riches.

Ranjit Dev had died in 1781. Brij Raj Dev was the ruler. His subjects and troops did not like him for his bad ways. Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya and Mahan Singh had made a pact to plunder Jammu jointly, but Mahan Singh did it alone. Towards the close of January, 1784, Mahan Singh led his plundering hordes to Jammu. Brij Raj Dev fled into the distant hills of Vaishno Devi. The leading citizens of Jammu waited on Mahan Singh and offered to pay tributes. Mahan Singh assured them that he had not come to plunder, but to establish his authority. In the night he surrounded the town and closed all exits. The whole town was thoroughly sacked. Not a single house or place escaped. Women were stripped of all their ornaments and costly clothes. Floors were dug in search of buried wealth. Plunder lasted for three days and nights. Loaded with enormous booty worth more than a crore Mahan Singh returned to Gujranwala.

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Haqiqat Singh was so deeply shocked at this treachery that he died soon afterwards.

Conflict with Kanhiyas, 1784

Jai Singh Kanhiya was grieved at the death of his cousin Haqiqat Singh and was upset at the perfidy of Mahan Singh. He demanded one-fourth of the booty for Jaimal Singh son of Haqiqat Singh, one-fourth for Durbar Sahib, and the rest to be retained by the plunderer. Mahan Singh flatly refused, saying it was the result of his own courage and bravery. On the Diwali day in 1784 all the Sikh sardars gathered at Amritsar. Mahan Singh tried to please his old guide and patron. With a tray of sweets he approached Jai Singh. He was lying on a cot in his Katra with his legs covered with a shawl. On seeing Mahan Singh he drew the shawl over his head shouting that he would not listen to a Bhagatia's (a dancing temple boy) lame excuses.

Mahan Singh resolved to retaliate for this insult. He attacked Jai Singh's camp outside Amritsar. When opposed by Kanhiya forces he fled away. He was pursued up to Majitha, 20 kms from Amritsar. A battle was fought in which Jai Singh was vanquished. He took shelter in the town of Majitha. It was besieged by Mahan Singh. Jai Singh escaped to Hajipur across river Beas, and collected a strong army. Mahan Singh retired to Gujranwala.

In February, 1785, Mahan Singh at the head of a strong force in collaboration with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Sansar Chand Katoch led an expedition towards Batala, the headquarters of Kanhiya Misl. Jai Singh's ablest son, Gurbakhsh Singh, with a force of 8,000 men advanced to oppose Mahan Singh. In the battle of Achal the daring youth was struck by a bullet at the very first charge, and was instantly killed. His soldiers took to flight.

After the battle of Achal Jai Singh retired to Naushahra where he reorganised his forces for a fresh struggle. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Sansar Chand got busy in occupying their former possessions. Mahan Singh alone remained in the field. Another battle was fought between Jai Singh and Mahan Singh at Naushahra. Both sides sustained heavy losses, but Jai Singh suffered a defeat. He escaped to his fort of Nurpur. Mahan Singh pursued him and laid siege to the fort. Mahan Singh did not like to stay at a distant place. He raised the siege.

While returning Mahan Singh was warmly received by Sansar Chand Katoch in his camp at Dinanagar. The Raja requested Mahan

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Singh to help in getting back his fort of Kangra from Jai Singh. He offered him a nazar of two lakhs of rupees in return. Mahan Singh agreed. A strong contingent of 1,000 men under Daya Ram and Muhammad Sālah was despatched to Kangra. They were instructed to realize a sum of two lakhs of rupees on entrusting the fort to Sansar Chand. This force along with that of Sansar Chand laid siege to the fort. Jai Singh's men offered a tough opposition. Mahan Singh's men had not brought sufficient money with them. They began to starve and asked Mahan Singh for money. He replied that they should demand Rs. 50,000 out of two lakhs from Sansar Chand. The Raja declined to pay before the fort had fallen. Thereupon both sides came to blows, and Muhammad Sālah was killed in an action. Daya Ram in a miserable condition returned to Gujranwala.

While going to Gujranwala, Mahan Singh visited Amritsar. Jai Singh had recently married a Bhangi princess. There Mahan Singh was attacked by Bhangis. He had a hard time. All ways of escape had been closed upon him. Bhag Singh Ahluwalia came to his rescue. He gave him passage through his own Katra, and thus got him out of the town. The Bhangis pursued Mahan Singh upto Majitha. He was saved by Bhag Singh who despatched his own troops behind the Bhangis to help Mahan Singh. Later on Mahan Singh established his own Katra at Amritsar.

Mahan Singh's second sack of Jammu, 1786

In the first expedition the people of Jammu alone had been sacked. The Raja's palaces and treasury had remained untouched, for the simple reason that the loot acquired from them was enormous. Now was the turn of the Raja to be fleeced.

Brij Raj Dev returned with his treasure from Vaishno Devi to Jammu shortly after Mahan Singh's retirement. The people also settled down in their peaceful avocations in due course of time. Two years had elapsed. Mahan Singh all of a sudden led a second expedition to Jammu at the head of 5,000 men. The government and the people were taken unawares. The remaining riches of the people, the Raja's entire treasury and armoury were all looted. Huge quantities of gold, silver, ornaments, diamonds, pearls and jewellery all worth a crore of rupees fell into Mahan Singh's hands. Immense arms and ammunition were taken possession of. The neighbouring chiefs were frightened. They paid tribute to Mahan Singh, and saved their territories from his depredations.

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Ranjit Singh's illness, 1786

In this campaign Mahan Singh's six year old only son, Ranjit Singh, was with him. He got an attack of smallpox at Jammu, and had high fever. Mahan Singh immediately returned to Ramnagar. Many rich presents were sent to Jawalamukhi temple and the Kangra temple. Thousands of rupees were distributed among Brahmans, the poor and beggars. Recitations from the holy Granth, Hindu Shastras and Quran were kept up continuously without any interruption. After twenty-one days Ranjit Singh got rid of his fever, but his eyes remained closed for many days more. Later it was discovered that the boy had lost one of his eyes.

Ranjit Singh's betrothal and marriage, 1786

Sada Kaur had met Ranjit Singh's mother Raj Kaur at the Jawalamukhi temple where she had gone to pray for the recovery of her son. Sada Kaur offered her only daughter Mahtab Kaur in marriage to Ranjit Singh on recovery. On Ranjit Singh's recuperation Mahan Singh held a magnificent function. Many sardars came to offer congratulations. At this function at Gujranwala came Jai Singh also. He made a formal proposal of her grand daughter's betrothal with Mahan Singh's son. Mahan Singh welcomed the proposal. With the union of Kanhiya misl, he thought, he would be able to overthrow the other misls of the western region. Exchange of presents was made then and there and the betrothal ceremony was performed with great pomp and show. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was also present. At his request Mahan Singh persuaded Jai Singh to return all the remaining territories of Jassa Singh to him. Jai Singh yielded, but Jassa Singh remained inwardly irreconciled. Ranjit Singh was married to Mahtab Kaur in 1786.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's enmity

The matrimonial alliance between Sukarchakias and Kanhiyas proved galling to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. He had not forgotten his expulsion from the Panjab and wished for the destruction of both Jai Singh and Mahan Singh.

All the Sikh sardars had come to attend Ranjit Singh's marriage. Mahan Singh spared no pains in looking after them including Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. After the marriage Mahan Singh left on a tour of his country. Jassa Singh suddenly made up his mind to fight Mahan Singh first and Jai Singh afterwards. He followed Mahan Singh in

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the company of Jodh Singh Kalāswalia. A fierce engagement took place between Jassa Singh and Mahan Singh near the banks of river Chenab. Jodh Singh Kalāswalia was killed and Jassa Singh fled away.

The fatal siege of Sodhra, 1790

Sodhra is 10 kms east of Wazirabad, and Gujrat is 13 kms to its west. Gujranwala is 32 kms south of Wazirabad. Sodhra was in the independent charge of Sahib Singh Bhangi. His father Gujar Singh Bhangi died early in 1790. Sahib Singh came from Sodhra to Gujrat to take possession of his father's capital and treasure. Mahan Singh was keen to seize Sodhra and Gujrat for himself. He demanded from Sahib Singh succession duty in token of his overlordship. Sahib Singh rejected his claim. Mahan Singh immediately besieged Sodhra. Mahan Singh's sister, Raj Kaur, waited upon her brother and tried to dissuade him from fighting. Mahan Singh paid no heed to her entreaties. In the night Sahib Singh came from Gujrat to Sodhra, and barefoot with turban round his neck he called on Darvesh Mastan Shah. He fell at the saint's feet and invoked his blessings. The Darvesh prayed to God to save the innocent and punish the guilty. The effect was instantaneous. Mahan Singh had such a violent attack of fever as assured him of his end. At a brief ceremony he tied a turban on Ranjit Singh's head with his own hands as a mark of his succession. He left 10-year-old Ranjit to conduct the siege. He appointed his most trusted companion, Dal Singh Kalianwala, as his guardian and himself retired to Gujranwala, where he passed away in a couple of days on 5 Baisakh Samvat 1847, (April, 1790).[1] He was only twenty-six years of age. There is not the least doubt about it that if he had lived ten years longer, he would have become the sole monarch of the whole of northern India from the Khaibar Pass to the Ganga, and from the Himalayas to the Arabian Sea, and Emperor Shah Alam II would have become his protégé. But nature has its own way to punish or reward according to one's deeds in due course sooner or later.

James Browne in 1787 estimated the military strength of Mahan Singh at 15,000 horse and 5,000 foot in the Rachna Doab, and about 5,000 horse and foot in the Chaj and Sind Sagar Doabs. Imam-ud-din Husaini wrote in 1796 that Mahan Singh commanded about 22,000 horse and foot.

[1]The Persian Akhbarat and Marathi records confirm Mahan Singh's death in 1790.

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TERRITORIES

Rachna Doab

Akalgarh, Daska, Goindke, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Jamke, Karyal, Mandiala, Murliwala, Naushahra, Pasrur, Rangpur, Sandhanwala, Shaikhupura, Sodhra, Tegha Mandiala.

Chaj Doab

Bhera, Jalalpur, Kunjah, Miani, Salt Range.

Sind Sagar Doab

Chakwal, Dhanni, Fatahjang, Jehlam, Kot Raja, Kot Sahib Khan, Makhad, Pind Dadan Khan, Pindi Gheb, Pothohar, Sayyidpur.

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CHAPTER 15

The Sikh Movement in Northern Hills

Six groups of hill states

The hill states lying in the outer ranges of the Himalayas fell into six political groups. The first group comprised many small states situated between the Indus and the Jehlam. They were ruled over by Muslim chiefs and were under the influence of Kashmir. The second group embraced the states lying between the Jehlam and the Ravi controlled by Jammu. The third group included states situated between the Ravi and the Satluj which were under the domination of Kangra. The fourth group contained Shivalik hill states located between the Satluj and the Jamuna. The fifth group was formed by Garhwal state which controlled the whole territory lying between the Jamuna and the Ganga. The sixth group was known as Kumaon hills extending from the Ganga to the borders of Nepal.

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The objectives of the Sikhs

The Sikh movement into the northern hills proceeded simultaneously with their conquest of the Panjab plains and domination of the Ganga Doab. The resources of the hills were not many. But they had been more or less safe from foreign invaders and the plunderers of the plains. As a result the hill chiefs had accumulated some riches in course of time. Besides, owing to political unrest which had been prevailing in the plains for many years past, the traffic and trade had beer diverted to the hills. Thus in addition to fleecing money from the Rajas, the Sikhs had also the prospects of plundering traders and merchants. They dealt in Kashmir articles such as shawls, carpets, furs, musk, saffron and fruit. Moreover there was no fear of opposition as the people and the chiefs had lost their martial spirit owing to their peaceful life for centuries in the past. Further, they were tempted

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to capture handsome boys for conversion to Sikhism. They had no attraction for hill beauties as the Sikhs in those days controlled their sex to a wonderful degree owing to Guru Gobind Singh's injunction. After plunder the hill rulers were made tributary by the neighbouring Sikh sardars.

The trade route in the hills

The trade route in the plains was closed at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion, and it remained unused until the end of the eighteenth century owing to the Durrani invasions, Maratha incursion, Sikh disturbances and highwaymen. The trade between Northern India, Kashmir and Kabul reverted to the hill route. This road started from Hardwar to Dehra Dun, Paonta on the Jamuna, Nahan, Nalagarh, Bilaspur on the Satluj, Nadaun on the Beas, Haripur (Guler), Nurpur, Basohli on the Ravi, Jammu and Srinagar.

(A) THE NORTHERN HILLS

The Shivalik Hills

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The lowest ridges of the Himalayas interspersed with duns or valleys lying below 5,000 feet are called Shivalik hills. They include the hills of Dehra Dun, Nahan, Kangra, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Jammu and Pabbi hills of Gujrat. The low hilly tracts touching the plains in the districts of Jehlam, Rawalpindi and Attock up to river Indus also belong to the Shivalik range.

Kumaon : The Sikhs never entered the Kumaon hills. The entrance to them lay through Rohilkhand which was first under Rohilla Afghans, a warlike people, and in 1774, it passed under the control of Nawab of Oudh whose country was protected by the British Government. The Sikh raids into Rohilkhand were confined to the eastern side of the Ganga, not beyond 40 to 50 kms from the river.

Garhwal : The Garhwal state came under the Sikh domination in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Dehra Dun was capital of the lower division of Garhwal state. The Raja's deputy posted there paid regularly and punctually without the least resistance the amount of rakhi to the Sikhs. There was another division with its headquarters at Kheynaspur, about 30 kms north. Its officer also paid rakhi to the Sikhs. On February 28, 1783, George Forster noted the arrival of two Sikh horsemen. They were received by the Raja's officers most obediently. They were put up in the best house, and were provided

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with fine beds. Their horses were groomed and fed on green barley pulled out of the fields. Rae Singh Bhangi of Buriya was the overlord of the Raja of Garhwal who paid a sum of Rs. 4,000 as an annual tribute to him.

Sirmur : Mor or Maur was a Kashatriya tribe to which belonged Chandragupta Maurya, the earliest builder of the Indian empire more than two thousand years ago. In the Panjab the senior branch of the Maur tribe settled at Nahan and came to be called Sarmaur or Sirmur head of the Maur tribe. The junior branches began to live in another hill known as Morni hill lying between Nahan and Chandigarh and in Bharmaur (Chamba State). The Rajas of Nahan maintained cordial relations with the Sikhs throughout. Guru Hari Rae and Guru Gobind Singh spent a good deal of time in the Sirmur state. Banda Bahadur was a native of this state. Raja Kirat Prakash of Nahan was a contemporary of Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. Kirat Prakash was trying to establish his rule over all the lower hills lying between Nalagarh state and river Jamuna. He had occupied Morni hills. He was keen to possess Panjor Gardens, which had been seized by Gharib Das of Mani Majra. His estate consisted of 69 villages. Kirat Prakash sought Amar Singh's assistance. The Raja met Amar Singh at Banur, and established lasting brotherhood by exchanging turbans at a formal ceremony. Then the combined forces of both the chiefs defeated Gharib Das, and Panjor was annexed to Nahan state. A member of the Raja's family seized Naraingarh from the Ahluwalias. It was restored by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1807. Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, the most ferocious Sikh chief in the Cis-Satluj region, used to attack Sirmur state. Its Raja quietly paid him a sum of Rs. 2,000 as annual tribute and thereby saved his state from Bhanga Singh's depredations.

Nalagarh or Hindur : In 1763 Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as head of the Dal Khalsa realized tribute from Nalagarh state. Hari Singh Dallewalia of Sialba and Rupar seized the parganahs of Bahrampur, Chanderi and Sahadat from Nalagarh state, about 1768, and made it tributary.

Bilaspur or Kahlur : Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as leader of the Dal Khalsa realized tribute from Bilaspur state in 1763. Hari Singh Dallewalia seized parganahs of Berian and Machholi from Bilaspur state and made it tributary to him. George Forster passed through Bilaspur state on 21 and 22 March, 1783, and came across "a body of Sicques, who had impressed with a lively terror even this sequestered region."

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The Kangra Hills

The Kangra hills and valley have the Zaskar range of the Himalayas on the north, river Satluj in the east, lower Shivalik hills on the south, and river Ravi in the west. They are drained by the Beas and its tributaries.

Three routes lead into the Kangra valley, from Pathankot, Bharwāin and Una. Kangra is 94 kms from Pathankot and its height above sea level is 686 metres.

In the Kangra group there were sixteen states in all, fifteen under Hindu rulers and one under a Muslim chief. Basohli, Bhadu, Bhangal, Chamba, Datarpur, Guler also known as Haripur, Jaswan, Kangra, Kotila, Kulu, Kutlehar, Mandi, Nurpur, Siba and Suket were ruled over by Hindu chiefs and Shahpur by a Muslim chieftain.

The Sikhs were familiar with these hills as they used to take shelter there during their persecution by the Mughals and the Durranis. The Kangra hills were the first to experience Sikh penetration.

The Sikhs, the men of the blade, wandered about in the Kangra hills. Forster who travelled across these hills in the beginning of 1783 frequently came into contact with small bodies of Sikhs roaming about everywhere. He writes :

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"Severe depredations were committed on them by the Sicques, who plundered and destroyed their habitations, carried off their cattle, and if strong and well formed, the male children, who were made converts to the faith of Nanock." The hill rajas could not resist the rising tide of the Sikhs, and they sought safety only in submission. After the death of Adina Beg Khan in September, 1758, the Dal Khalsa under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia realized tribute from Kangra and Mandi. In 1763 he again secured tribute from Nalagarh, Bilaspur and Kangra hills.

Kangra : Ghamand Chand Katoch, 1751-1774

Raja Ghambir Chand left behind eleven sons. Ghamand[1] Chand was his real brother's son. On the death of Ghambir Chand he managed to win over the courtiers to his side. All the eleven boys were performing the obsequies of their father on the banks of river Beas at village Churu situated between Nadaun and Sujanpur. He got all the boys arrested and blinded and threw them into a cave where they perished.

[1]Latif, *Panjab*, 284, wrongly states "Ghamand, raja of Katoj, Nidhan Singh Randhawa, the raja of Ka ngra."

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Ghamand Chand assumed sovereignty. He extended his rule over the Jalandhar Doab and northern parts of the Bari Doab. He subdued all the smaller hill states in the region. A large part of Kutlehar state was annexed. He built the fort of Pathiar in Chamba at a height of 4,566 feet above sea level, and the fort of Riyah situated 3½ kms from Tira.

Ghamand Chand owed allegiance to Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1759 he was confirmed by the Durrani as governor of the region lying between the Satluj and the Ravi including the Jalandhar Doab. To win the favour of the Afghan monarch Ghamand Chand employed 4,000 Musalmans, chiefly Rohillas and Afghans in his army.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia fought with Ghamand Chand three times. First time he was defeated. Second time he attacked Ghamand Chand in collaboration with Jai Singh Kanhiya, and they were again repulsed. The Katoch chief was attacked third time with a stronger force and with greater vigour. This time he lost the day and became Jassa Singh's tributary, about 1770. The other hill rajas followed suit. They accepted the overlordship of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and paid him in all about two lakhs of rupees annually.

The Kangra fort was then held by the last Mughal governor, Saif Ali Khan. Ghamand Chand established his capital at Nadaun on the left bank of river Beas. He erected fine buildings and laid out gardens. He founded Tira Sujanpur on river Beas above Nadaun.

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Sansar Chand Katoch

Ghamand Chand died in 1774. His son and successor, Tegh Chand, followed the same policy. Even on Ahmad Shah Durrani's death in 1772, he retained the Muslim troops in his service. He was succeeded in 1775 by his 10-year-old son, Sansar Chand.[1] He largely extended his authority.

He seized the rich tract of Rihlu from Chamba whose raja died fighting at Nerti now called Dehra. He built the fort of Bajwara near Hoshiarpur. It was worth Rs. 4,391 annually. Malot famous for its goddess was placad under Ganda Kohia. It yielded Rs. 2,711 a year. He annexed the part of Bilaspur state lying to the west of river Satluj. He conquered Kutlehar and Bhangal and captured the fort of Ramgarh from Guler. He annexed a part of Mandi State which lay

[1]Tegh Chand had three sons, Sansar Chand, Fatah Chand and Mān Chand. Man Chand died childless. Fatah Chand's descendents lived in village Lamba.

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above the Rivalsar lake. He built palaces for different seasons, those at Ambtar near Nadaun on the banks of river Beas for the rainy season, at Tira for winter and at Alampur opposite Tira on the Beas for summer. Among the temples constructed by him at Tira, Gauri Shankar, Thakurdwara, Nirdeshwar and Murli Manohar were famous. He was a tolerant ruler. He built tombs in memory of Fazl Shah at Nadaun, of Bhika Shah at Bhawarna, of Gosain Sarupgir at Sujanpur and of Bawa Manigir at Jaisinghpur. All these four saints lived at his court. Nawab Ghulam Muhammad of Rampur took shelter with Sansar Chand. The Raja granted him a jagir worth several thousand. On his death he erected a tomb over his grave on a hill above Sujanpur. He married his sister to Raja Dharam Prakash of Nahan.

Sansar Chand settled at Nadaun learned Brahmans, astrologers, astronomers, artists, painters, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, musicians, physicians, sculptors, jesters and gave them cash allowances and jagirs. He laid out a lovely chaugan in the heart of the town. On account of its salubrious climate, abundance of fruit, exquisite scenery, plentifulness of pure water of river Beas, numerous facilities of living a good life, enchanting beauties as wives, Nadaun became so attractive as to give origin to the following saying :

Jo jāega Nādaun, Wāpis āegā kaun

(One who goes to Nadaun, will never like to return.)

The celebrated German traveller, Baron Charles Hugel, visited Nadaun in 1835. He wrote that the town had about 250 houses in addition to Raja's palaces. The plain from the bank of the river extended to 3 kms. The river Beas was "full of very pure and rapidly flowing water." The Hindus, both men and women, bathed in the river three times a day.

Sansar Chand realized that the danger of an Afghan invasion had greatly diminished and that the Sikhs had become predominant. He reduced the number of his Muslim mercenaries and recruited a body of two hundred Sikhs in his army. This measure, says Forster, proved injurious to his interest. He remarks : "The ordinary revenue (of Kangra) estimated at seven lacks of rupees, has been much diminished by the chief's alliance with the Sieques, who spread destruction wherever they go. These marauders are now acting the part of the man whom fable represents to have been invited by the horse to aid his contest with the boar; and you know the uses to which the thoughtless horse was applied, when victory was decided in favour of the combined forces."

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The Kangra Fort

The supremacy of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia did not last very long. In 1778 he was overthrown by his rival Jai Singh Kanhiya. His suzerainty was accepted by most of the Kangra states. Being very ambitious Sansar Chand wished to take possession of the fort of Kangra, the ancient stronghold of his ancestors.

The importance of the Kangra fort was expressed in a popular saying : "He who holds the fort holds the hills." The fort of Kangra enjoyed a great reputation for its strength. It stood on the summit of a high hill. It occupied a narrow strip of land lying between the rivers Manjhi and Banganga. The walls of the fort on the side of the Banganga rose to a height of one hundred metres. It was accessible only from the side of the town. The fort was separated from the town by a road only a few hundred feet wide, across which a deep ditch was cut at the foot of the walls. It possessed seven gateways and twenty-three bastions.

At this time the fort was held by Saif Ali Khan, a Shia, the last Mughal faujdar of Kangra. This brave man, though completely isolated and commanding nothing more than the territory within the range of his guns, sturdily maintained his position against all the onslaughts which were delivered upon him for nearly forty years. Only once he was forced to give up his allegiance to the Delhi Emperors, when in 1758 he was coerced by the strong arm of Adina Beg Khan, the last Muslim viceroy of the Panjab.

Sansar Chand made several attempts on the fort, but all were frustrated by Saif Ali Khan. The Raja invited assistance from Jai Singh Kanhiya promising to pay the expenses of the troops at the rate of Rs. 2,000 per day. Jai Singh readily agreed. He sent his son Gurbakhsh Singh at the head of a strong contingent in the company of Baghel Singh Karorasinghia, who was always ready to fish in troubled waters. The combined forces laid siege to the fort in 1782. It continued for nearly a year[1]. In spite of all the rigours of the siege Saif Ali Khan remained steadfast, and held his own remarkably well. But he was a dying man, and passed away in 1783. His dead body was to be conveyed to the imambara for burial outside the fort.

This news leaked out both to Sansar Chand and Gurbakhsh Singh. The Mughal gunners in the fort were won over by Sansar Chand.

[1]Khushwaqt Rae says that Sansar Chand kept the siege of Kangra fort for three years.

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They promised to let his men in for a suitable reward. Gurbakhsh Singh was negotiating with Zulfiqar Ali Khan, the son of late Saif Ali Khan. The young faujdar finding his position untenable had agreed to hand over the fort to the Sikhs in return for certain concessions. At a secret hour when the Nawab's men carried off the corpse of the Nawab to the imambara, the gunners sent a word to Sansar Chand to attack and capture the fort. This information became known to Sikhs, who were nearest the gates to bear the brunt of musketry fire from the ramparts. As soon as the gate was opened, the Sikhs entered the fort without meeting any opposition from Zulfiqar Ali Khan. They closed the door upon Sansar Chand's men, and took possession of the fort to the chagrin of the Raja of Kangra.[1]

In sustaining the siege for a long time Saif Ali Khan was assisted by the Rani of Bilaspur acting as regent for her infant son. Her soldiers numbering about 800 horsemen and 8,000 foot kept on devastating the Kangra territory. George Forster observed in March, 1783: "Unable himself to repel the enemy the Mahometan solicited the aid of the Bellaspour Ranee, who with the spirit of a heroine, afforded speedy and vigorous succour to her neighbour, whose cause she has already revenged by plundering and destroying almost every village of Kangrah; the chief of which now vainly asserts, that the Ranee seeing his country destitute of defence, seized, under the colour of assisting her ally, the occasion of augmenting her own power."

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Jai Singh retained possession of this fort for nearly four years. In 1787 he was obliged to surrender it to Sansar Chand in exchange for the territories in the plains which had been captured by the Katoch chief.

The Kangra Hill States

Basohli : Basohli came to be dominated by the Sikhs in March, 1782. Raj Singh of Chamba was determined to revenge himself upon Basohli whose chief had caused great damage to his state. He invaded the state in 1782, seized the capital, sacked the country, and realized a fine of one lakh of rupees.

The raja of Basohli invited a body of Sikhs to expel the Chamba forces from his state. The Sikhs came, ejected the invaders, and being fascinated with the place, refused to withdraw. George Forster

[1]According to Khushwaqt Rae provisions ran short in the fort and Saif Ali surrendered the fort to Jai Singh.

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passed through Basohli and crossed the Ravi in the disguise of a Muslim merchant on April 10, 1783. He recorded :

"The boatman at the ferry of Bissouly, though a brother Mahometan, made an exhorbitant demand of hire which was considerably lessened by the interference of the Sicque horsemen, who saw the imposition, and had only to make known their will to effect obedience.——— In the ferry-boat were two Sicques going to the fort, of which, a detachment they belonged to, had taken possession, in consequence of being called in to the assistance of the Bissouly chief. Though this be the invariable result of every connection made with the Sicques, the infatuated mountaineers never fail to seek their aid when engaged in war. A bordering chief had invaded the Bissouly districts, plundered the inhabitants, and burned their villages, before any opposition was made. The Sicques were called in to repel the enemy, and defend the fort of Bissouly, but after performing the required service, they became pleased with their new situation, and refused to relinquish it."

The date of the capture of Basohli is recorded on a stone now lying in the pavement in front of the temple of Lakshmi Narain at Chamba. The inscription reads as follows : "Sam., 58, Chetpar, 1 Basohli da shahar fatah kita." (On the first of Chet of the year 58 (11 March, 1782) the town of Basohli was conquered).

Bhadu : Bhadu came under the control of the Sikhs about this time. George Forster wanted to go from Basohli to Jammu. The direct road from Basohli to Jammu passed via Sambarta. But the road was infested by the Sikhs. Forster was advised to pass quickly by the other route via Bhadu in order to avoid meeting any Sikhs for fear of being plundered. At Bhadu there were only a few Sikhs.

Chamba : Originally Bharmaur, it was founded by a brother of Chandragupta Maurya. The Sikhs increased their influence in Chamba at the invitation of its Raja. Ranjit Dev of Jammu was establishing at this time his rule over the hills between the Chenab and the Ravi. Taking advantage of the minority of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba (1764-1794), and his own blood relationship with the queen-mother, he appointed Aklu, one of his officials, chief minister of the state. On the death of the queen-mother, under Raj Singh's orders Aklu was imprisoned. Ranjit Dev was indignant at this wanton insult. He called upon his vassal Amrit Pal of Basohli to lead an expedition into Chamba. Amrit Pal overran the northern parts of the state called Churah, and seized and held the capital for three months. On this

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occasion Amrit Pal issued a copper-plate deed, bearing a date corresponding to May 5, 1774.

Raj Singh managed to escape to Kalanaur in the Gurdaspur district and sought assistance from Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. The combined forces of the Sikhs and Chamba expelled the Basohli chief. Raj Singh paid to the Sikhs one lakh of rupees, became tributary to Ramgarhias, and thus saved his territory from usurpation by Ranjit Dev. Chamba paid a tribute of four hundred rupees to the Sikhs.

Datarpur : Datarpur was an offshoot of Siba under Dadwal clan of Rajputs. It remained under the Sikhs up to 1786, and with Raja Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra from 1786 to 1806.

Guler (Haripur) : Guler also called Haripur lying in a mountain defile was an offshoot of Kangra. It came under Jassa Singh Ramgarhia first and then passed on to Jai Singh Kanhiya. In 1786 it was recovered by Sansar Chand Katoch.

Jaswan : The Jaswan state was under Jaswal clan of Rajputs. The Jaswan valley lies between Rupar and Una. It remained under the control of the Sikhs up to 1786, when it was seized by Raja Sansar Chand.

Kulu : It was almost hilly covered with forests. Only 60 square miles of area was under cultivation. The Sikhs were satisfied with a couple of hundred rupees as a tribute.

Kutlehar : It was a small state in Kangra district enclosed by two branches of the Jaswan chain of the hills near the Satluj river. It paid only a nominal sum as a token of submission.

JAWALMUKHI

It is situated at the foot of a hill and has a paved bazar and about 600 houses. A small canal flows into the temple and the town. It was constructed by Akbar. The height of the temple is 1958 feet and about 100 feet up the plain. The temple had a large number of dancing girls. The main temple has fire flames getting out of holes, shelves and pits in the wall. Numerous temples and shrines surround the main temple. Akbar on a visit offered a gold umbrella to the temple, and covered the whole dome with gold plates. There are numerous springs of water.

Ranjit Singh's engagement with Mahtab Kaur was settled here by Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya and Raj Kaur mother of Ranjit Singh.

In 1792 Bhag Singh Ahluwalia paid a visit of pilgrimage to Jawala-

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mukhi. Sansar Chand came from Nadaun, 13 kms from Jawalamukhi to meet him. Both exchanged turbans as a token of sincere friendship. Turbans were exchanged between the two young princes, Fatah Singh and Anurodh Chand.

Mandi : Mandi came under the influence of the Sikhs about the same time as the other hill states in the Kangra region. It offered a few thousand rupees of tribute to the Sikhs.

Nurpur : The original capital of Nurpur was Pathankot, and therefore the Rajput clan which ruled over Nurpur was called Pathania. Nurpur became tributary to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and after his expulsion from the Panjab the overlordship of this state passed on to Jai Singh Kanhiya. In 1781 its Palahi and Kandi tracts were usurped by Amar Singh Bagga and Tara Singh of the Kanhiya misl. George Forster was at Nurpur in April, 1783. He found it fairly extensive in area fetching a revenue of four lakhs annually. There was greater peace and prosperity than at Jammu about that time. Many merchants were migrating to Nurpur from Jammu. He wrote :

"It enjoys a state of more internal quiet, is less molested by the Sicques, and governed more equitably than any of the adjacent territories." In 1786 it was taken over by Sansar Chand Katoch.

At Nurpur Forster met a merchant Daud Khan by name. He was a Panjabi, but had migrated to Jammu to avoid the political convulsions in the plains. He lived there during Ranjit Dev's reign. Afterwards Brij Raj Dev's exactions compelled him to leave Jammu and settle at Nurpur. There he enjoyed "with a moderate security of property, the benefit of a fine air, and a plentiful country."

Siba : Siba was an offshoot of Guler. It was with the Sikhs upto 1786, and under Sansar Chand from 1786 to 1806 until the Gorkha invasion of Kangra hills. Forster gives an interesting account of this place. On reaching Siba Forster found that the whole district lay "wholly at the mercy of the Sicques, who are, I think, the plainest dealers in the world. The fort of Sebah, standing pleasantly on the brink of a rivulet, lay on our road ; and in passing it, I saw two Sicque cavaliers strike a terror into the chief and all his people, though shut up within their fort. They had been sent to collect the tribute which the Sicques had imposed on all the mountain chiefs from the Ganges to Jumbo ; and offended at the delay of the payment, these high-spoken men were holding to the affrightened Hindoos, that style of language, which one of our provincial magistrates would direct at a gypsy, or sturdy beggar."

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A little farther when Forster was riding alone leaving his companions behind, he met a Sikh horseman. In a "peremtory manner" he inquired from Forster his occupation and place of residence. "My answers", says Forster, "were neither explanatory nor gracious, and my departure abrupt, though he had expressed a strong desire of further communication; and seemed offended at the unconcern of my deportment." Forster escaped molestation from him.

TALWARA

Forster noticed a body of Sikh horsemen coming from the opposite direction near Talwara. It created a serious alarm in the mind of the travellers. Forster unperceived by his companions concealed his bills and cash in a bush and took them when the Sikhs had passed out of sight.

As he advanced on the road, Forster came across another body of the Sikhs. Forster told them that they had been enjoined by their companions who had gonea head to join them speedily. This adroitness saved him from any molestation by this batch of the Sikhs. Believing that they had been spared by their comrades, they did not covet his property.

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(B) JAMMU

Jammu's supremacy over thirty-six hill states

Jammu had been in close relationship with the three groups of hill states. The first group comprised Kashmir and many small states situated between the Indus and the Jehlam, all ruled over by Muslim chiefs. This group was dominated by Kashmir then under Durrani occupation.

The second group embraced Jammu and the small states lying between the Jehlam and the Ravi. There were twenty-two states in all. Out of these eight states chiefly situated between the Jehlam and the Chenab were under Muslim chiefs. They were Akhnur, Bhimbar, Kishtwar, Khari-Khariali, Kotali, Punchh, Rajauri and Riasi.

The remaining fourteen states were Hindu, all lying between the Chenab and the Ravi. They included Bahu, Balor (now known as Basohli), Behandralta (now called Ramnagar), Bhadarwah[1], Bhadu,

[1]*Bhadarwah :* This small state formed a part of Jammu. It consisted of two valleys, Niru and Kargal. These two rivers are tributaries of the Chenab. The valley is almost flat, and is about 7 kms long and less than 2 kms wide. There is little space for cultivation. The hill slopes are covered with pine trees. At the close of the eighteenth century there were about 600 houses in the town of Bhadarwah, and population nearly 3,000. An open street leading to the fort

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Bhoti, Chaneni, Dalpatpur, Jammu, Jasrota, Lakhanpur, Mankot (now called Ramkot), Sanba and Trikot.

Ten states—Akhnur, Bahu, Dalpatpur, Jammu, Jasrota, Lakhanpur, Mankot, Riasi, Sanba and Trikot—were ruled by a family of which Jammu was the head, and three, Basohli, Bhadarwah and Bhadu, were ruled by branches of the same family.

Of all these twenty-two states Jammu was the head, and the following saying testified to it :

"Bāiyān wich Jammu sardar hai."

Rajauri lying between Jehlam and Chenab paid tribute to Jammu. The rulers of Kishtwar and Mankot were forcibly converted to Islam by Aurangzeb. They retained their Hindu identity and many customs and manners of Hinduism.

The third group included Kangra and other states situated between the Ravi and the Satluj known as the Jalandhar group. There were fourteen states in all, thirteen Hindu-Bhangal, Chamba, Datarpur, Guler also known as Haripur, Jaswan, Kangra, Kotila, Kulu, Kutlehar, Mandi, Nurpur, Siba and Suket. Shahpur was under a Muslim chief. They were dominated by Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra, who was a tributary to Jammu. Thus Jammu was supreme in thirty-six hill states.

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Ranjit Dev's Accession, 1730

Raja Dharab Dev of Jammu had four sons—Ranjit Dev, Ghansham Dev, Surat Singh and Balwant Singh. On his death in 1730, he was succeeded by Ranjit Dev who was then about thirty years old. He was an ambitious prince, bent upon extending his dominions. In two years after his accession he subjugated four neighbouring chiefs, Amrit Pal of Basohli, Daya Pal of Bhadarwah, Saeedullah Singh and Karmullah Singh of Kishtwar and Azmat Dev of Mankot.

Khan Bahadur Zakariya Khan was the viceroy of the Panjab from 1726 to 1745. Earlier he had been the governor of Jammu from 1714 to 1720, and of Kashmir from 1720 to 1726. The Government of Delhi was greatly alarmed at Ranjit Dev's activities, particularly on account of his subjugation of two Muslim states.

formed the market. More than half the inhabitants were Kashmiris. They were shopkeepers and cultivators. In winter they made shawls for the merchants of Nurpur and Amritsar. The Rajas of Bhadarwah were Mian Rajputs, and were allied to the ruling families of Basohli and Kulu. Drew, 104-6 ; Hutchison and Vogel, II, 614.

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Twelve years' imprisonment at Lahore, 1733-1745

Emperor Muhammad Shah ordered Zakariya Khan to punish Ranjit Dev. The Khan Bahadur led an expedition against Jammu in 1733. Ranjit Dev submitted without fighting. He was kept a prisoner at Lahore for twelve years from 1733 to 1745. Adina Beg Khan, the governor of the Jalandhar Doab interceded on behalf of Ranjit Dev. On his recommendation Ranjit Dev was set free. He was required to pay a fine of two lakhs of rupees, half of which was to be paid at once on his arrival at Jammu. He was sent to Jammu under custody of Hakim Khuda Bakhsh, an ancestor of Faqir Aziz-ud-din. On receiving the stipulated money, Khuda Bakhsh was returning to Lahore when he learnt that Khan Bahadur had died on 1st July, 1745. Adina Beg's men were with the Hakim. The money was kept by Adina Beg Khan.

Second imprisonment of nine months, 1757-58

In 1752 Ahmad Shah Durrani had conquered Panjab and Kashmir, and Jammu became tributary to him. In 1757 the Durrani appointed his own 11-year-old son Timur Shah, viceroy of the Panjab. Jahan Khan, his commander-in-chief, was appointed guardian of the prince and in charge of administration of the province. He sent a force against Adina Beg Khan who fled into the Bharwain hills of Hoshiarpur district. He ordered Ranjit Dev to trace Adina Beg's place of hiding and capture him. Ranjit Dev did not pursue the matter seriously out of regard for his patron. He was taken prisoner and kept at Lahore where he remained for about eight or nine months. The famous Mughlani Begam rendered him some help clandestinely. Ranjit Dev escaped when Marathas and Sikhs expelled Jahan Khan from the Panjab in April, 1758. In 1759 he seized some parts of Sialkot district adjoining Jammu territory.

Guided Durrani expedition to Kashmir, 1762

Sukhjiwan Mal, the governor of Kashmir, had failed in paying annual tribute to Ahmad Shah Durrani. He wanted to punish him and required active support of Ranjit Dev. The Durrani Emperor invited Ranjit Dev to Lahore. The Raja was terrified as he had suffered imprisonment at Lahore twice before. The Durrani prime minister, Shah Vali Khan, sent his son as a security to Jammu against Ranjit Dev's presence at Lahore. Inwardly Ranjit Dev was hostile to Sukhjiwan. He was keen to have Kashmir also under him. He joined

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the Afghan expedition under Nur-ud-din at the end of September, 1762. He built a bridge of logs of tall trees over river Chenab. The Afghan army crossed safely and marched to the Tosha Maidan pass. Sukhjiwan came to oppose them. His commander-in-chief Bakhtmal deserted him and joined the enemy. Sukhjiwan was captured and blinded. In November, 1762, at Lahore, he was crushed under hoofs of horses by orders of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Ranjit Dev was granted a jagir in Kashmir which yielded 60,000 kharwars or 48,000 quintals of rice.

Ghamand Chand made tributary, 1772

Another strong and popular chief in Ranjit Dev's neighbourhood was Raja Ghamand Chand Katoch of Kangra. He was a favourite of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Ranjit Dev was jealous of the Kangra chief also. He could never cast an evil eye on the Katoch during the life-time of Ahmad Shah Durrani. On the death of this monarch in April, 1772, and the establishment of Sikh power in the Panjab, Ranjit Dev expected no danger from Afghanistan. He sent an army against Ghamand Chand. All the petty chiefs on the way acknowledged Ranjit Dev's authority without offering any resistance. The fort of Kangra was held by Saif Ali Khan, the last Mughal governor of the place. Ghamand Chand had his capital at Nadaun on the banks of river Beas. A little above Nadaun he was building a new capital for him at Tira Sujanpur. Ghamand Chand opposed the Jammu army near Nadaun, but was defeated with heavy losses. Ghamand Chand agreed to pay annual tribute of one lakh and ninety thousand, and surrendered his son Tegh Chand as a hostage for punctual payment of the tribute.

In 1774 Ranjit Dev instigated his protégé Amrit Pal of Basohli to subdue Chamba which remained under Ranjit Dev only for three months.

In addition to Jammu province, Ranjit Dev established his supremacy over the following other estates :

Akhnur, Andarwah, Balwath, Bara Dalla, Chakana, Chanda Majra, Charal, Dausal, Jankawan, Kabula, Kot Bhilowal, Parol, Shahpur and Shakargarh, formerly called Dialgarh, a tahsil of Sialkot district. Ahmad Shah Durrani had granted him three Badshahi parganahs of Aurangabad, Sankhatra and Zafarwal in Sialkot district. Thus he held sway in the plains of the Panjab over the country lying north of a line drawn from Dinga in the Chaj Doab to the river Chenab at

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Kalowal, and from Roras to Sankhatra, extending up to Munda Khel in Shakargarh parganah on the Ravi. On the border between Jammu and Chaprar in Sialkot district, Ranjit Dev built a fort and called it Ranjitgarh after him.

His coins

Ranjit Dev struck coins during the earlier part of his reign in the name of the Mughal Emperors of Delhi. Later on they were struck in his own name. On these coins he used the Bikrami year, but retained the year of the rule of Emperor Shah Alam II, 1759-1806. The following inscription appeared on one of his coins :

OBVERSE

Ranjit Dev ābād kard, Sambat 1841.

REVERSE

Zarab dār-ul-amān Jammu, San 27, Jalus maimanat manus. (*Sambat 1841*=1784 AD)

Ranjit Dev had died in 1781. The name of Ranjit Dev on the coins issued in 1784, three years after his death, has a special significance. Ranjit Dev was succeeded by his eldest son Brij Raj Dev. He was profligate, licentious and of wicked nature. People of the state hated him. In order not to excite their anger and revolt he retained his father's name on the coins which were in the hands of every one in the state. Ranjit Dev was greatly beloved by all his subjects, both Hindus and Muslims, and they held his name in the highest esteem. The Jammu rupee was called Chilki rupee and was worth sixty paise or 5/8 of the British rupee current in Bengal.

Ranjit Dev's relations with the Sikhs

The Sikh chiefs used to send their families with cash, jewellery and other valuable articles to Jammu during the Durrani invasions, and everything remained absolutely safe and secure. The Sikhs came to know about its riches and its military weakness. Jammu was first sacked by Gujar Singh Bhangi in 1756 and by Hari Singh Bhangi in 1761. In 1765 Jassa Singh Ahluwalia realized a tribute of Rs. 3,75,000 and a number of horses from Ranjit Dev for having paid a tribute to Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1770 Ranjit Dev submitted to Jhanda Singh Bhangi. By his wise policy he saved his beloved capital from Sikh ravages, and warded off the danger for a time. He paid only thirty

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thousand rupees by way of tribute, according to Forster, "in a much less proportion than what was levi·d in the adjacent territories. The Sicques indeed, aware of the respectable state of the Jumbo force, and the ability of the chief, were contented with the name of tribute." Shahamat Ali puts this amount at sixty thousand rupees, Gian Singh at one lakh, Sialkot District Gazetteer at one lakh and a quarter, and Khushwaqt Rae at two and a half lakhs. In the beginning he seems to have paid only Rs. 30,000.

Ranjit Dev had two sons, Brij Raj Dev and Dalel Singh. The elder was of a dissolute character and spent his time in wine and women. Ranjit Dev reprimanded him, but to no effect. Expecting that his end might come at any time, he decided in 1774 to nominate his younger son as his successor. Thereupon Brij Raj Dev revolted against his father and got ready to seize the throne. The foolish young man invited military assistance from Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh Kanhiya. The father in his helplessness sought help from his suzerain Jhanda Singh. Ranjit Dev pitched his camp far away from Jammu to save his beloved city from the horrors of a sack, on the borders between Jammu state and Sialkot district at Udho Chak on the banks of Basantar river. Half the army of Ranjit Dev was won over by his son, but so popular was the Raja that the deserters were not prepared to fight against their benevolent master. Fighting continued for long on the banks of this river near village Wasosahawa in parganah Zafarwal. During the campaign Charat Singh died by the bursting of his own gun. Jai Singh Kanhiya got Jhanda Singh murdered. Both the parties had lost heavily and decided to return. Ranjit Dev patched up peace with his son and declared Brij Raj Dev his successor. He also made peace with the Sikhs. He paid Jai Singh Kanhiya a sum of one lakh and a quarter. Young Mahan Singh, son and successor of Charat Singh, established lifelong brotherly relations with Brij Raj Dev in a formal ceremony by the exchange of turbans (*Dastārbandi*).

Ranjit Dev's death, character and achievements

About 1780 Ranjit Dev planned the conquest of Kashmir. On hearing this news the governor sent his agents to Jammu and dissuaded Ranjit Dev from executing his scheme, on payment of tribute. In spite of his family dissensions and the Sikh incursions, Ranjit Dev maintained his supremacy over almost all the twenty-two states. Shortly

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afterwards Ranjit Dev died early in April, 1781. Ataullah, the vakil of Ranjit Dev at the imperial court, Delhi, informed prime minister Najaf Khan on April 18, 1781, that Raja Ranjit Dev had died a natural death. Ahmad Shah Batalvi and Hutchison and Vogel assign the same year to Ranjit Dev's death.

The times in which Ranjit Dev lived were of utter lawlessness, confusion and chaos in Northern India. Yet his state and capital were in fact dār-ul-amān or an abode of peace. The leading merchants, wealthy bankers and jewellers skilful artisans and eminent political personages from Lahore, Delhi, Kashmir and many other places in the Panjab settled at Jammu to live in safety and security. Among them were Malika Zamani, widow of Emperor Muhammad Shah, Mughlani Begam, ex-governor of Panjab, Hari Singh, son of Diwan Kauramal, chief Minister of Lahore and governor of Multan, Dalpat Rae, son of Diwan Lakhpat Rae, Kabuli Mal the ex-governor of Lahore, and many other nobles of the courts of Delhi, Lahore, and other places. Thus during Ranjit Dev's reign the city of Jammu prospered enormously. It became an emporium of trade both of the plains and the hills including Kashmir.

During Abdali's third invasion, December, 1751 to March, 1752, Muin-ul-Mulk, the viceroy of the Panjab sent his family and treasures to the care of Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu. In October, 1758 his widow, the famous Mughlani Begam, again sought asylum at Jammu. Ranjit Dev received her 8 kms from Jammu. He alighted from his horse and paid homage to her. He offered her a suitable residential house, some land and cash allowance. Later on a new and bigger house was built for her and her establishment of 200 persons. The Raja called on her twice a week. He raised her cash allowance to Rs. 1,000 per mensem.

The Raja showed such consideration and regard to the Muslim immigrants from Kashmir and Panjab as drew praise from George Forster who stayed at Jammu for some time in 1783, two years after Ranjit Dev's death. He wrote :

"He avowedly protected and indulged his people, particularly the Mahometans, to whom he allotted a certain quarter of the town, which was thence denominated Mughalpour." He built a mosque for them in the new colony. At the time of Muslim call for prayers he would stop his horse until it was over. The Hindus complained that the Muslims drew water in leather buckets from their wells which polluted it. He abruptly dismissed their complaint saying that water

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was a pure element and it could not be defiled by the touch of leather.

A despatch received by Warren Hastings, the Governor-General at Calcutta on April 19, 1780, stated : "The said Raja is distinguished for his courage and valour and is so just and kind to his ryots that the inhabitants of the Panjab and the Doab (Ganga) have since the time of Nadir Shah's invasion, always found a safe refuge in his country from the tyranny of unscrupulous adventurers. The writer knows of no people from Attock to Delhi who live more free from care and fear than those of Jammu."

Ranjit Dev was a man of great ability, acumen and administrative tact and talent. In those bad days of bitter communalism, he displayed impartiality, religious tolerance, forbearance free from any tinge of fanaticism which was matched only by his contemporaries, Sukhjiwan Mal in Kashmir, Lahna Singh Bhangi at Lahore, and Ghamand Chand Katoch of Kangra.

More than fifty years after the death of Ranjit Dev, Baron Charles Hugel bore the same testimony : "The prosperity of Jammu was at its height under Ranjit Dev, whose mild government extended equal protection to Hindu and Mahommedan while the Panjab was overrun with the horrors of war." One hundred years later Frederic Drew wrote : "A century ago the old regime was flourishing under Raja Ranjit Dev; he is still spoken of with the highest respect as a wise administrator, just judge, and a tolerant man." He was indeed an embodiment of justice, generosity and kindness.

Brij Raj Dev

Ranjit Dev was succeeded by Brij Raj Dev. As he was extremely unpopular with his subjects, he feared that he might be ousted at any time by his younger brother Dalel Singh. Dalel Singh was not a man of seditious nature and spent his time in religious devotion. In 1782 he decided to pay a visit to Trikota Mai now known as Vaishno Devi. Accompanied by his elder son Bhagwant Singh he left Jammu, and stayed for the night at Charanpadika now called Katra. Here both the father and the son were strangulated to death by Brij Raj Dev's men. Dalel Singh's younger son, Jit Singh, who was at Jammu, was imprisoned.

Jit Singh managed to escape and fled away to seek help from Bhangis. Finding that the Bhangis were supporting Jit Singh, Brij Raj Dev made up his mind to recover the parganah of Karianwala

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that had been annexed by the Bhangis. Forster calls it the "most valuable division of the Jumbo districts." Taking advantage of the keen spirit of rivalry and enmity between the Bhangis and Kanhiyas he invited Haqiqat Singh's assistance promising to pay one lakh of rupees. Just about that time Jai Singh had taken his third wife from Bhangis. He tried to dissuade Haqiqat Singh who did not like to lose this opportunity of associating himself with Jammu and getting a rich reward. He marched towards Jammu. Meanwhile Brij Raj Dev had himself recovered Karianwala. He declined to pay the stipulated money.

Battle of Dinpur, 1782-83

Haqiqat Singh was greatly annoyed. With the approval of Gurdit Singh Bhangi he seized the parganah of Karianwala for himself. Brij Raj Dev sought intervention of his turban-exchanged brother, Mahan Singh. The Bhangis and Kanhiyas laid siege to the strong fortress of Dinpur belonging to Jammu. Brij Raj Dev and Mahan Singh took up an entrenched position and fighting began. Finding the opponents rather too strong, the Kanhiyas sought help from Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, saying :

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"We in haste have besieged Dinpur. The Jammu ruler, Brij Raj Dev has a large army. Sardar Mahan Singh has come to his help. If this place is conquered by your aid, we can maintain our prestige. You have been kind to us before."

At the same time Sobha Ram and Nanak Chand, the confidential agents of Brij Raj Dev and Mahan Singh waited upon the Ahluwalia chief, and said : "You are the chief leader of the Panth, and every one expects help from you. We are fighting with Kanhiyas and Bhangis. Let us decide the matter between ourselves, and give no help to them."

Jassa Singh decided to help the Bhangis and Kanhiyas who had sought his help first. He despatched Kanwar Bhag Singh at the head of a strong contingent to march straight to Dinpur. He himself advanced via Dera Baba Nank, where he was joined by Gurbakhsh Singh, son of Jai Singh Kanhiya. At a distance of one stage from Dinpur the leaders of Bhangi and the Kanhiya misls waited upon him. Just then arrived the representatives of Jammu Raja and Mahan Singh requesting him not to fight against them. The Ahluwalia offered certain terms which were not acceptable to the Raja and his ally.

This led to fighting as before. The Jammu forces were compelled

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to retreat for some distance. At this Jiwan Singh, the commander of the garrison, offered to surrender the fort on condition of security. Jassa Singh wished to satisfy the other party also. He prevailed upon both the parties to make peace. According to the terms the fort of Dinpur went to the share of Mahan Singh. Karianwala remained with Haqiqat Singh. Brij Raj Dev had to pay to Haqiqat Singh an annual tribute of Rs. 30,000. The promised amount of one lakh of rupees was immediately paid. It was distributed between Bhangis and Ahluwalias. Brij Raj Dev got nothing, and lost much.

This took place in April, 1783, when George Forster was staying at Jammu. He makes a clear reference to this warfare which was then going on. He says that Brij Raj Dev was "then in the field." He "through the defection of many of his people, driven by oppressions to the party of his brother, became unable to make any effectual stand." Mahan Singh, "a powerful officer in that quarter", had "firmly established his authority at Jumbo", and that he possessed "a fort at the south entrance of the principal pass leading into the Punjab." Brij Raj Dev had to bear all the expenses of the Sukarchakia forces. The Raja imposed a tax on all the inhabitants of the city. The foreign merchants expected a heavy contribution. Forster writes : "For defraying the expense incurred by the Sicque troops, the Jumbo chief has made rigorous demands on the native inhabitants of the city, and is now throwing an eye on the foreign merchants ; who, dreading his disposition and necessities, have taken a general alarm." Forster noticed that everybody in Jammu was talking of war. He further observed that "the chief of Jumbo was much embarrassed in his finances, from a destructive war he had entered into with the Sicques ; that to raise supplies, he had levied a general contribution on the inhabitants of the city; and that his exactions had induced many of the principal merchants to abandon the place." Prinsep says that Brij Raj Dev extorted from Hari Singh, son of Kauramal Rs. 50 lakhs.

Pillage of Jammu, January, 1784

Haqiqat Singh was chafing for having lost his one lakh of rupees paid by Brij Raj Dev. He was determined to have his pound of flesh and something more if possible. He made up his mind to plunder Jammu; and searched for a pretext if any pretext was needed at all. He demanded the payment of his tribute of Rs. 30,000 from Brij Raj Dev after only six months. The Raja depending upon the support of Mahan Singh Sukarchakia protested against this demand offering to

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pay it at the end of the year. Haqiqat Singh feared that in case of his attack on Jammu, Mahan Singh would come to help his turban-exchanged-brother. So he suggested to Mahan Singh to join him in sacking Jammu, and divide the booty half and half. Mahan Singh, ambitious and unscrupulous as he was, readily accepted the proposal by throwing to the winds his solemn pledges of brotherhood.

The occasion chosen was mid-winter in January, 1784. They were callous enough to ignore the fact that the whole of Northern India was then in the tight grip of one of the severest famines this country had ever suffered from. It was called *Chalisa* as it occurred in 1840 Bikrami Samvat. In this year crops had absolutely failed for want of rain. Animals died by thousands. Poor people were starving. Robbers and dacoits abounded everywhere. No revenues were available

A certain day was fixed to reach the neighbourhood of Jammu. It was agreed that to avoid suspicion Haqiqat Singh would advance via Zafarwal and Pathankot while Mahan Singh would advance by the Chaprar route in Sialkot district. They were to reach Jammu in the night and would attack the city in the early hours of morning.

Meanwhile fighting was going on between Jai Singh Kanhiya and Amar Singh Bagga, a companion of Haqiqat Singh. Amar Singh was besieged at Sujanpur by Jai Singh and his son Gurbakhsh Singh. Haqiqat Singh hurried to the rescue of Amar Singh. After bringing about peace in the territory of Amar Singh, Haqiqat Singh rushed to Jammu. He was late by three days.

Jammu was a flourishing city. Its people had accumulated great riches through prosperous trade. Mahan Singh did not wait for Haqiqat Singh and surrounded the city on all sides so that nobody could escape. Brij Raj Dev was so much terrified that he fled to Trikota mountains to the north of Jammu, now called Vaishno Devi hills. After the Raja's flight, the merchants of the city offered a large sum of money on the condition of his sparing the town from the horrors of sack. Mahan Singh listened to no appeals, fell upon the city, sparing no house and no shop, and acquired immense booty amounting to more than a crore of rupees.[1] While returning he set the city on fire. The neighbouring plunderers completed its ruin.

When Haqiqat Singh reached Jammu, he found the whole town in flames. He was struck with deep grief at this treachery and fell ill of the shock. He sent men to Mahan Singh asking for a share of the

[1]Khushwaqt Rae says the booty amounted to two crores.

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booty. Mahan Singh gave a flat refusal. Haqiqat Singh died immediately afterwards.

Second pillage of Jammu by Mahan Singh, 1786

During his first attack in January, 1784, Mahan Singh had plundered the people, traders, merchants, bankers and jewellers. Brij Raj Dev had escaped with his treasure. Mahan Singh was also in a hurry to retire from Jammu before the arrival of Haqiqat Singh. So he had not touched the palaces of the Raja. Shortly after Mahan Singh's withdrawal Brij Raj Dev returned to Jammu. Mahan Singh was waiting for an opportunity to plunder the palaces and the government treasury. He invaded Jammu again in 1786. He ransacked the state treasury and palaces with as much severity as he had fleeced the bankers and merchants of the city earlier. The people were again subjected to plunder. The booty again amounted to above one crore of rupees. The fortunes of the Sukarchakia misl were thus built on the ruins of this flourishing city. This time Mahan Singh made Brij Raj Dev his tributary.

Its result was that the shawl-makers shifted to several other places including Amritsar, Lahore and Nurpur. The district of Nurpur extended upto Pathankot and included Shahpur, Kandi and Lakhanpur. The town of Nurpur lies on the road from Pathankot to Kangra. The original inhabitants were Khatirs and Rajputs. The Kashmiri settlers made it famous on account of their production of shawls of pashmina wool and other woollen goods.

The battle of Rumal, 1787

First of all Jammu had been tributary to the Bhangis and Kanhiyas. Now Brij Raj Dev had accepted the suzerainty of Sukarchakias. The Sialkot district was in the immediate neighbourhood of Jammu. Almost the whole of this district was in the occupation of Bhangi sardars. Considering Jammu as their protégé, they began to encroach upon Jammu territory in the northern parts of the Sialkot district. Towards the close of 1786, plundering and ravaging the Jammu territory, they advanced up to the suburbs of Jammu city. Brij Raj Dev's Rajput blood in him forced him to show his mettle. When he came out to fight. the Bhangis fled back as they were laden with booty. The Raja pursued them. They were engaged in a battle at Rumal, 40 kms from Jammu. Owing to his dissolute life and harsh administration his troops were half-hearted to fight for him. The Raja lost the day as

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well as his life. "There is a small cenotaph in this village, which is pointed out as the place where Brij Raj Dev was killed and his forces routed."[1]

Brij Raj Dev left a son named Sampuran Singh. He was a child of seven years. Ranjit Dev's two brothers were Surat Singh and Balwant Singh. Surat Singh had four sons, Zorawar Singh, Mian Ditta, Mian Mota, and Mian Bhopa. Mian Mota became regent during the minority of Sampuran Singh.

Mahan Singh Sukarchakia died in 1790, and was succeeded by Ranjit Singh. One of his notable chiefs, Dal Singh induced Ranjit Singh to visit Jammu and receive a nazar from his vassal, the Raja of Jammu. On his arrival at Jammu, Mian Mota with Raja Sampuran Singh, called upon Ranjit Singh and submitted to his authority. It was in 1793. Both the chiefs were of the same age. No sooner did the two youths meet than they began to play with each other. During the sport, Ranjit Singh pulled off the cap of Sampuran Singh who immediately retaliated by throwing off the turban of Ranjit Singh. It led to great dispute and resentment. The elderly people on both sides reconciled them. Ranjit Singh was offered rich gifts. The two young men exchanged turbans and became friends.

Sampuran Singh died of smallpox in 1797. He had no issue. In June, 1797, Jit Singh son of Dalel Singh, and grandson of Ranjit Dev, was enthroned at Jammu by the coutriers and the neighbouring hill rajas. The Jammu state became exclusively tributary to Ranjit Singh in 1801, and it was annexed by him in 1816. Ranjit Dev's descendents settled at village Gharota in Gurdaspur district.[2]

[1]Griffin in *Panjab Chiefs*, II, 4, puts this event in 1798.
[2]Griffin, op. cit., calls it Akhrota near Dinanagar in the Gurdaspur District.

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Sikh attempts to take it

The Kashmir hills lying to the west of river Chenab were not so much affected by the Sikhs as those situated to the east of this river. There were several reasons for it. In the first place west Panjab came into the possession of the Sikhs later. Secondly, Kashmir was directly under the control of the Durranis, and the Sikhs were not prepared to challenge the Afghan power in the Panjab and Kashmir simultaneously. Thirdly, all the Muslim states beyond river Chenab looked upon Kashmir as their head and were ready to support it. Fourthly, the Sikhs were afraid of penetrating into the inner ranges of the Himalayas for fear of cold, snow, blizzard, and long distances from their homes, about 320 kms both from Rawalpindi and Jammu. Fifthly, they were not acquainted with the roads and passes leading

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into the valley. Lastly, the Sikh misls were given to faction and friction, and could not make a united effort to seize Kashmir.

In spite of all these difficulties and obstacles some individual Sikh chiefs made attempts to establish their influence in Kashmir. According to Syad Muhammad Latif Hari Singh Bhangi first subdued Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu at the head of 12,000 horse in 1764, and then "penetrated into the Kashmir Valley, where, however, they were repulsed with loss." Immediately after Ahmad Shah Durrani's retirement from Panjab in 1767, Gujar Singh Bhangi thought of conquering Kashmir. He first subdued Mirpur. Then he defeated Sulaiman Khan chief of Bhimbar and made him his tributary. He took Punchh. Then he advanced farther. A little away from the borders of the valley of Kashmir he besieged a hill fort. His Sikh soldiers felt afraid of penetrating into high mountains. They were terror-stricken of snowfall and snowstorms. They wished to return from there. As the Sikhs had no heart in fighting, they were defeated and fled back leaving their baggage at the disposal of the enemy.

Milkha Singh, a colleague of Gujar Singh Bhangi attempted to conquer Kashmir from his headquarters at Rawalpindi. According to Cunningham he penetrated beyond Murree up to Kohala on the Jehlam river. There he was opposed by the Afghans and drove him back with a loss.

Azad Khan, governor of Kashmir, 1783 to 1785, employed 3,000 Sikhs in his service to bar the path of Timur Shah's army at Rawalpindi and not to let him enter Kashmir by that route.

A Marathi despatch of 18 January, 1786, states that Mahan Singh Sukarchakia waited on Prince Humayun, son of Timur Shah Durrani at Hasan Abdal, between Rawalpindi and Attock. At that time Timur Shah was engaged in subduing Kashmir, and he had sustained heavy losses. He asked the Prince to place Kashmir under his control for an annual tribute. He offered to help the Shah in securing a safe passage through the Panjab to Delhi.

The valley

The valley of Kashmir is about 130 kms long and 40 kms wide. It lies a little above 5,000 feet above sea level. It consists of three valleys. The Jehlam valley is the largest. The two small tributaries of river Jehlam are Lidar and Sindh. Their valleys are equally enchanting. The whole valley is surrounded by high mountains. Originally, there were seven passes leading into Kashmir, four from the south,

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one from the west, and two from the north. Later on their number increased to twelve. The most famous of them in the second half of the eighteenth century were Banihal Pass, 9,200 ft. above sea level, Budil Pass, 14,120 ft., Pir Panjal Pass, 11,400 ft., and Tosha Maidan Pass, 10,500 ft. The valley was celebrated for the salubrity of its climate, the beauty of its breath-taking scenery, fertility of its soil, its production of high quality saffron, its manufacture of shawls and paper, and charming women.

Kashmir under the Durrani rule, 1752-1819

Gwasha Lal Kaul[1] says : "Whenever Kashmir was conquered by an outsider, it was with the connivance of the people." The last Mughal governor of Kashmir was Mir Muqim Kanth. In 1752 he was overthrown by Abul Qasim Khan. Mir Muqim Kanth escaped to the Panjab. He was accompanied by Khwajah Zahir-ud-din Diddamari and Maha Nand Pandit, a representative of the Hindus. They came to Lahore. In March, 1752, Ahmad Shah Durrani had conquered Panjab. These Kashmiri leaders waited on the Shah and invited him to conquer Kashmir. Ahmad Shah sent a force of 15,000 men under Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi. Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu was instructed to co-operate with the expedition. Abul Qasim Khan opposed the Afghans at Shupian. The battle lasted for fifteen days. Abul Qasim after three months' rule was defeated and sent to Kandhar as a prisoner. Kashmir passed under Afghanistan.

From 1752 to 1819 in sixty-seven years twenty-five Afghan governors ruled over the valley. Except from 1754 to 1762, the rest of the period was marked by corruption, cruelty and tyranny. The Afghan rulers were Sunnis. They set the Sunnis against Shias, and both of them against the Hindus. On account of a policy of rapacity and exploitation the country was economically ruined. Hindus were bitterly persecuted and Muslims were subdued into silent submission. Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam.

The Durrani kings demanded a tribute of twenty lakhs annually. If the amount was remitted punctually, the governor was given full liberty of action. No notice was taken of his violence and oppression.

The best governor of Kashmir was Sukhjiwan Mal. He was a Khatri of Bhera in West Panjab. He was a capable administrator, great soldier, scholar, poet and statesman. Both Hindu and Muslim

[1]*Kashmir through the Ages.*

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historians are full of praise for him. He was in the service of Shah Vali Khan, prime minister of Ahmad Shah Durrani. He was sent to Kashmir as chief secretary under Abdullah Khan Ishaq Aqasi, the first Afghan governor of Kashmir. The Aqasi squeezed money from the people and realized that no more money could be collected to pay the annual tribute. Hence after six months, he went to Kabul to save his booty. The government was placed in the hands of his deputy Khwajah Abdulla Khan. The Khwajah adopted his predecessor's policy of amassing wealth. The people began to hate him. Abul Hasan Khan Bandey was the leader of Kashmiri Muslims. He supported Sukhjiwan Mal in seizing the reins of government. After four month's rule the Khwajah was put to death and Sukhjiwan Mal became the governor. He was the first Hindu chief in more than four hundred years.

Ahmad Shah Durrani confirmed him. As the great majority of the population was Muslim, Sukhjiwan began to give them special consideration. He joined the Muslims in Friday prayers in mosques. He celebrated all the Muslim festivals with great zeal. He organised weekly meetings of eminent theologians. The poor people received full sympathy and consideration from him.

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At the time of Sukhjiwan's execution the contemporary Ghulam Ali Azad recorded :

"He was a handsome youth, possessed of good qualities and friendly feelings towards Islam. He repaired all the shrines and gardens. After finishing the court business, he fed two hundred Muslims with a variety of food every day. On the 11th and 12th of every month he got sacramental food cooked and distributed it among the people. He bestowed favours on every visitor to the court whether he was poor or rich. Once in every week he held a poetical conversazione. It was attended by all the well-known poets. At the end of it he embraced everyone of them. He engaged five best scholars to compile a history of Kashmir from the earliest times. Each writer was provided with ten assistants. The head of these historians was Muhammad Taufiq whose pen name was Lalaju."

The second historian was Muhammad Ali Khan Matin. He was the son of Hisam-ud-din Khan Irani, and was the author of *Tazkirat-ul-Ahyar*. He was an imperial mansabdar. The third historian was Mirza Qalandar, younger brother of Matin. It was believed that he had composed one lakh verses. The fourth was Muhammad Ali Pinhān. The name of the fifth historian could not be traced.

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In 1754, a severe famine occurred in Kashmir. Sukhjiwan Mal procured huge quantities of rice. One lakh kharwars (80 kg in weight) distributed free among the poor people, while those who could buy were supplied rice at great concessional rates (one anna a kg.). In 1755 crops failed again due to severe blizzards and swarms of locusts. Sukhjiwan acquired enormous quantities of rice from the neighbouring territories and helped the people as before.

Ahmad Shah Durrani "demanded an exhorbitant tribute equal to ten times the revenue[1] of the country." He was not interested in spending any amount of money on the people of Kashmir. Sukhjiwan's humble submissions and protests were ignored. He refused to resort to extortion. In sheer despair and desperation he offered allegiance to Alamgir II of Delhi (1754-59) who conferred the title of Raja on him.

Ahmad Shah had been busy in suppressing the revolts at home from 1753 to 1756, in crushing the power of the Jats, and Marathas from 1757 to 1761. In February, 1762, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Sikhs, and then stayed in the Panjab up to December, 1762. In June he sent an expedition against Kashmir, but it failed owing to the flooded rivers and difficult terrain. Ranjit Dev of Jammu was hostile to Sukhjiwan. He envied his efficiency and popularity. Besides he cast longing eyes on possessing the valley.

The Durrani was determined to punish Sukhjiwan, and he wanted the active support of Ranjit Dev. Another expedition left Lahore in command of Nur-ud-din at the end of September, 1762, when the rains were over. He built a bridge of logs of tall trees over river Chenab. The Afghan army crossed safely and marched to the Tosha Maidan Pass. Sukhjiwan came to oppose at the head of a strong army. His commander-in-chief Bakhtmal deserted him and joined the enemy. Sukhjiwan fled away. He fell into the hands of an owner of a flour grinding mill (Āsiābāni) who surrendered him to Nur-ud-din. He took out Sukhjiwan's eyes and sent him to Lahore. In November, 1762, he was trampled down to death by horses. He had ruled for eight years and four months. A poet said : (Dar hazār-o-yak sad-o-haftado-panj, Sukhjiwan shud tabāh ba mal-o-ganj.) Ranjit Dev was granted a jagir in Kashmir which yielded 60,000 kharwārs or 48,000 quintals of rice.

After Sukhjiwan there began a reign of terror, corruption and

[1]R.K. Parmu, *A History of the Muslim Rule in Kashmir, 1320-1819*, p. 355.

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bigotry. For example Sarbuland Khan, 1762-65, plundered and deformed Shias.[1] Faqirullah Kant, 1767-68, resorted to forcible conversion of Pandits to Islam.[2] Amir Khan Jawansher, 1770-76, "molested, tortured and taxed (Pandits) beyond endurance."[3] Haji Karimdad Khan Bamzai, 1776-83, "ruled like a reckless, merciless tyrant. His heavy hand fell on all, high and low, Hindus and Muslims."[4] He used to capture Bambas from Muzaffarabad and drowned them in the Dal Lake.[5] Mir Hazar Khan, 1793, was bitterly opposed to Shias and Pandits. "Many of their leaders were put in sack bags and then drowned in the Dal Lake."[6] Ata Muhammad Khan Alkozai, 1800-1805 "began to molest girls of noble families, nay any handsome girl in order to satisfy his carnal madness. Many parents were compelled to shave heads of their daughters rather than allow them to be molested and degraded."[7] Azad Khan also seized Bambas, tied their hands and feet and threw them into the Dal Lake.[8]

As a result the Pandits began to leave the valley. They migrated to Kishtwar and Bhadarwah. Many went to Punchh and Rajauri. A number of them settled at Amritsar, Delhi, Gwalior and Lucknow. The Shia manufacturers of shawls and carpets migrated to Jammu, Nurpur, Amritsar and other places. The flourishing Indian concerns closed their business.

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Bambas and Kakkas

Bambas were a branch of the Chibhali tribe. Originally they were Hindus, but most of them were converted to Islam. The Bambas lived on the right bank of river Jehlam between Jehlam town and Muzaffarabad as well as in the valley of Kishan Ganga river. The Kakkas lived along the left bank of river Jehlam. The whole region was known as "Kakka-Bamba country." They were under two or three chiefs whose headquarters were at Muzaffarabad.[9]

Kakkas are wrongly included with Bambas as both are quite distinct from each other. They inhabited the Muzaffarabad district

[1]Parmu, R.K., 359.
[2]Kaul, Gwasha Lal, 67.
[3]Parmu, 362.
[4]ibid.
[5]Kirpa Ram, Diwan, *Gulzar-e-Kashmir*, 1870, Persian, 238.
[6]Parmu, 369.
[7]ibid, 373; Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London, 1895, 198.
[8]Kirpa Ram, op. cit., 239.
[9]Drew, Frederic, *Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 59; Elphinstone, *Caubul*, 236.

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south of river Jehlam up to Kohala. They were ruled by a large number of petty rajas. Their country was mountainous, covered with dense forests. They were all Muslims. The Durranis treated them with great consideration as they formed their only connection with Kashmir.[1]

[1]Elphinstone, *Caubul*, 236; *Punjab Notes and Queries*, June, 1886, p. 152, no. 637.

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CHAPTER 16

Nature, Organisation and Administration of Sikh Misls

The Sikh territories

The country controlled by the Sikhs extended from river Ganga including the districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Mirath in the east to river Indus from Attock to Mithankot on the west, in the north from Shivalik hills comprising Kangra, Jammu and Bhimbar to the borders of Sind in the south.

The districts which contained the largest Sikh population were Rupar, Ludhiana and Firozpur in the Cis-Satluj region, Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar in the Jalandhar Doab, Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Lahore in the Bari Doab, and Sialkot and Gujranwala in the Rachna Doab. The Sikh population was mostly agricultural.

Amritsar was larger than Lahore. It was the richest city in the Panjab. Big merchants and bankers had settled there. While other towns were exposed to the fury of the invaders, the Sikhs had made it a point of honour to save their holy city. It was frequently subjected to foreign aggression, but most of its battles were fought outside the precincts of the town. When on the eve of an invasion, Amritsar was vacated, the Bhangi sardars safely escorted the population to the northern hills. Further, it was their firm belief that by dying there they would go to heaven. No persecution could tear away this faith from their soul.

The Jats formed the backbone of peasantry. The Jats were either Muslims, Sikhs or Hindus. In West Panjab now Pakistan they were mainly Muslims, in Central Panjab Sikhs and in Eastern Panjab now Haryana Hindus. According to Ibbetson, the Muslim Jat was far inferior to the other two as an agriculturist. He was lazy, devoid of industry and thrift. His main characteristic was false pride. The Sikh Jat was by far the best agriculturist of the three. His love of money

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and keenness to enjoy a good life spurred him to exertion. The Hindu Jat was not so diligent and hard-working or "self-reliant as the Sikh, but he was decidedly superior to the Muhammadan." Another class of cultivators in east Panjab was the Rajputs. They were mostly Muslims and were called Ranghars. They were "decidedly inferior in physique, industry and thrift to the Jats."

Panjab in those days was thinly populated. Henry Lawrence[1] estimated the population at 15 lakhs. Another estimate given in a paper read before the Institute of France put the population at three millions. Smyth[2] placed the population of the Panjab including Jammu and Kashmir at about five millions.

The proportion of different communities as given by Lawrence was Sikhs about one-sixth of the total population, Muslims about one-third. It means Hindus and Sikhs combined were double the number of Muslims. Hindus were mainly traders and shopkeepers. The Sikhs were peasants and soldiers. The Muslims were artisans.

The most densely populated areas in the Panjab were the Jalandhar Doab and upper Bari Doab. According to the *First Administration Report of the Panjab* density of population was 420 per square mile in this region.

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Main features of the misl system

1. *The Purpose :* The misl system came into being to eliminate the Mughal rule from the Panjab, to liberate it from foreign invaders and to establish an independent government by the sons of the soil. It was founded on a common faith and a common political necessity. The system worked successfully as long as there were a foreign enemy to fight, new territories to conquer and fresh spoils to share. It met the greatest need of the time and fully achieved its objectives. This system produced martyrs whose noblest deeds would ever remain alive in history. It created heroes before whom the Rajput chivalry of early medieval days pales into insignificance. This system succeeded in winning freedom for the mother country from the grip of the most ferocious people before whom all other Indians had succumbed.

2. *Nature :* Different writers on the subject have defined the misl organisation differently.

A. Cunningham considered the misls as a "theocratic confederate feudalism." 1. He called them theocratic, because (i) "God was their

[1] *Adventures of an Officer*, I, 84.
[2] *History of the Reigning Family of Lahore.*

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helper and only judge", (ii) "community of faith or object was their moving principle", (iii) the devotion to the steel of Guru Gobind Singh was their material, and (iv) twice a year on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali in April and October-November, they gathered at Amritsar before the holy Granth to chalk out a common programme of action. 2. He considered them confederate because the misls were under some control of Sarbat Khalsa or the entire Sikh community, and they were not absolutely independent. 3. He thought that the misls were feudal in character because their lands were divided and sub-divided among the dependents of the chief and his followers. Cunningham says :

"The obvious feudal or military notion of a chain of dependence was acknowledged as the law and the federated chiefs partitioned their joint conquests among themselves and divided their respective shares in the same manner among their own leaders of bands, while these again sub-divided their portions among their own dependents, agreeably to the general custom of sub-infeudation."

B. Ibbetson is of the view that the misl organisation was "a curious mixture of theocracy, democracy and absolutism." (1) By way of explanation he says it was a theocracy because the Sikh sardars and soldiers fought for the Guru and formed plans at Amritsar before the Adi Granth. (2) It was a democracy because every member of a misl even of the lowest rank enjoyed full social and political equality. (3) As there was no check on the power and authority of a sardar except the fear of desertion or revolt, "it was virtually an absolutism."

C. Latif says a "misl may be aptly termed a theocracy."

D. A.C. Banerjee thinks that the misl organisation was neither theocratic, nor feudal. It was not theocratic because the misls were not strictly governed by the principles of Sikh religion, and the Sikh priests were not supreme in asserting their authority. It was not feudal because feudalism could not exist without monarchy, and the subordinate Sikh sardars were at liberty to shift their allegiance and join another sardar. He holds that the misls "really formed a confederacy which was democratic in composition and religious in its cohesive principles."

E. To other writers the misl organisation appeared a "curious and baffling political puzzle."

F. In our view the misl organisation was a combination of six factors-autocracy, confederacy, democracy, feudalism, secularism and

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theocracy. (i) It was an autocracy because the sardar possessed absolute power which as a rule was benevolent despotism. (ii) It was a confederacy because the system was founded on an alliance of all the misls for national and Panthic purposes. All the misls normally worked together under one leader against a common foe or in a common enterprise. (iii) It was a democracy as every individual in the misl enjoyed social equality and full freedom of thought and expression. The Sikh sardars had been followed to the field by their relations and by young men from their locality as equals, not as hired retainers. So they considered themselves as partners or associates. They were commanders of troops in their expeditions. Major H.M. Lawrence, Political Agent in charge of British relations with the Sikhs, wrote :

"The affectation of equality was not restricted to the Sardars, but each horseman in his own allotment considered himself as an independent functionary, if not a Prince : he was tied to his chief by the bond of mutual self-interest, as long as he remained in that service; if displeased, he changed his banner, and found many ready to welcome him."

In reality perfect equality existed among the individual members of a misl, between soldiers and sardars, and among the misls irrespective of the fact that some misls were stronger, larger and richer than others. The sardar was obeyed during an expedition and in the battlefield. Afterwards there was no such obligation. Baron Charles Hugel noticed "each one acting according to its own thinking." Everybody in his own misl as well as in the Dal Khalsa enjoyed complete political, social and religious equality. (iv) It was feudal in character because it was a system of landholding but with a difference. The feudal system of the Sikhs was not the result of a gift from the sardar. The heads of misls did not create and endow their followers. On the contrary the chiefs were created and endowed by them. The sardars were elected by their soldiers. The head of a misl had under him a number of minor chiefs. They had their own subordinates, going down to the common troopers. Whatever booty was acquired by the members of a misl, was placed in a common pool. First of all sardar's share was set apart, then of the minor sardars, and the rest was equally divided among the troopers, each of whom termed himself a sardar.

Similarly, the territory conquered or seized by a misl belonged to all the members of it. The sardar was the chief owner. He kept a certain portion for himself, and the remaining part was divided among

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his subordinate chiefs. They assigned villages to their retainers already occupied by them. A village could be in possession of more than one person and his property could be small or large. In case of landed estates change from one misl to another was not generally approved. When such transfers of loyalty had taken place, there was frequent warfare. In most of the cases both sides were joined by other misls.

5. Secularisation : The sardars were staunch Sikhs, but they were not fanatics. The Musalmans had been their persecutors and extirpators, yet as rulers the Sikhs never ill-treated them, and frequently employed them as writers and administrators.

George Campbell testifies this fact. He says : The Sikh rulers were really indigenous, not foreign conquerors. At the same time, like most native rulers, they were not exclusive and unduly prejudiced in favour of their own people, but employed capable Muslims and others almost as freely as Sikhs.

One common feature of the life of the Sikh chiefs in those days was the maintenance of langars or free dining halls, where people of all classes and creeds were fed. The langars were kept open even in the worst years of drought, and afforded relief to members of the poor classes who flocked to them in search of food.

6. It was a theocracy for it was based on principles of Sikh religion. The Sikh sardars owed allegiance to the Gurus and the Panth. The decisions taken at Akal Takht, Amritsar, before the holy Granth, called Gurmatas, were binding on all and could not be defied with impunity. The main emphasis was on the convenants between God, Guru, Granth and the Khalsa.

The Sikh sardars

In the beginning the hereditary principle was not observed in the misls. The times needed a bold, brave, intelligent and wise man. In consequence the head of a misl was chosen on the law of merit and the claims of a sardar's sons or relatives were ignored. For example the Ramgarhia misl was founded by a Jat, but later on its leadership was entrusted to a carpenter. Similarly the headship of the Bhangi misl was not entrusted to Chhajja Singh's sons, but to his companion Bhuma Singh. After him it went to Hari Singh who was not related to him. The ability and capacity for leadership was preferred to hereditary claim. Later on when the misls had been fully established the principle of heredity came into being. The headship of a misl passed

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on from father to son or his nephew or even to his widow. As Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had no son, his cousin Bhag Singh succeeded him. On the death of Jai Singh Kanhiya and his son Gurbakhsh Singh in his lifetime Sada Kaur widow of Gurbakhsh Singh assumed the headship of the Kanhiya Misl.

In his own domain each Sikh sardar was an absolute ruler. He exercised complete authority, including the power to put a person to death. As a large part of the country under him lay in ruins owing to foreign invasions and civil strife, he was keenly interested in increasing population, agriculture and trade. He offered all sorts of concessions to the immigrants from Delhi region and the Ganga Doab as well as from the neighbouring Sikh misls and states. "Hence in the Seik territories", says George Thomas, "though the government be arbitrary, there exists much less cause for oppression, than in many of the neighbouring states."

There were few among them who could read or write and all of them spoke in Panjabi which Hugel called "corrupt Hindustani."

The Sikh sardars led a simple life. They got up one hour before daybreak, washed, bathed and said morning prayer, Japuji or Sukhmani or both. An hour after sunrise they had breakfast consisting of bread, butter and lassi or churned curd mixed with water and separated from butter. Then they attended business of the state. They took lunch at midday and enjoyed a short *siesta*. At 3-00 in the afternoon a court was held, attendance at which was voluntary. Generally complaints were heard from the public and decided then and there. At about 5 p.m. roasted gram or maize were eaten and gulped down the throat with cold water. Evening meal was taken an hour after sunset. The musicians sang Shabad Rahras for entertainment. Before going to bed hot milk was drunk according to one's liking. Generally one kilogram was the rule. Ardas was repeated at bed time. All were fast asleep by 10 p.m.

The prosperous condition of the Sikh chiefs was confined exclusively to rural standards which put them almost on equality with their subjects. It is thus described by an eye-witness : "Visit the Sikh jagirdar in his castle and you will find much that speaks of affluence and rude comfort, little of civilization or improvement. Through fields promising abundant harvests, you will find your way to the entrenched fort, which is at once the title deed of his estate, the asylum of his family and the store-house of his plunder. You will be met by the Singh himself on the draw-bridge, a venerable figure, with a beard of

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which Abraham or any of the twelve Patriarchs might have been proud; by his side are his sons, and his sons' sons, and a train of followers, a patriarchal group from the centre of which the old man will make his offerings of sweets and rupees..... He will show you over his fort, which exhibits on all sides signs of rural abundance."

Most of the writers on the Sikhs have no good word for the administration of the Sikh chiefs. It is customary with them to deprecate their rule as harsh and oppressive. If their rule was sometimes harsh, it was also paternal; if it was occasionally strict, it was sympathetic; and if it at times appeared crude and rough, it was mild and tender. On the whole it was benevolent and people were satisfied with it.

The relations between the ruler and the ruled were cordial and intimate. Many of the sardars were as obscure and insignificant, as they were weak and poor. Many had nothing more to command than a ruined castle, a few square kilometres of land, a few hundred rupees of revenue and an army of a few soldiers. All this did not matter for the subjects. Riches and forces of the chief were not the criterion for the subjects to render him ready and willing obedience. The strength of the rulers did not lie in their material prosperity, but it struck its roots deep in the affection of the people. The Sikh chiefs regarded their subjects as members of their family, and the people paid them by their sincere devotion and deep respect.

Was it not a marvel to see the Sikh chiefs squatting on the ground in the midst of their subjects, plainly dressed, unattended by an escort, without any paraphernalia of government, talking, laughing and joking as if with their comrades, using no diplomacy with them, but having straight forward dealings, simple manners, upright mind and sincere language ?

Peace and Progress

The Sikhs knew how essential peace and order was to the progress of the country. Thus, though they frequently plundered non-Sikh territories, and indulged in mutual warfare with their co-religionists, they maintained good government in the territories under their personal control. All the contemporary authorities with one voice declare that the cultivator in particular and trader, artisan and menial in general flourished under the rule of Sikh chiefs.

As early as 1776 Colonel Polier wrote : "The extensive and fertile territories of the Seiks, and their attachment and application in the

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midst of warfare, to the occupation of agriculture, must evidently produce a large revenue. The districts dependent on Lahore, in the reign of Aurangzebe, produced, according to Mr. Bernier, a revenue of two hundred forty-six lacks and ninety-five thousand rupees; and we are naturally led to suppose from the industrious skill of the Seiks in the various branches of cultivation, that no great decrease of that amount can have taken place since the Panjab has fallen into their possession."

In the famine of 1783 most of the Sikh chiefs continued their langars or free dining halls to supply food to the poor and the needy. Some of them spent all their money for this purpose. Speaking about a Sikh chief of the Montgomery district a report says : "The famine of 1783 AD occurred in Budh Singh's time. He is said to have sold all his property, and to have fed the people with grain from the proceeds."

In 1788 James Rennell[1] recorded : "We know but little concerning the state of their government and politics: but the former is represented as being mild." Further on he remarks : "They have extended their territories on the south-east, that is, into the province of Delhi : very rapidly of late years ; and perhaps, the zamindars of that country may have found it convenient to place themselves under the protection of the Seiks, in order to avoid the more oppressive government of their former masters."

About the toleration of the Sikhs in religious matters the same writer recorded : "They differ from most religionists, in that, like the Hindoos, they are perfectly tolerant in matters of faith."

William Francklin was for several years in touch with the Sikhs. In 1798 he wrote : "But though fond of plunder, the Seiks, in the interior parts of their country, preserve good order, and a regular government : and the cultivation of their lands is attended with much assiduity."[2]

About the close of the eighteenth century George Thomas who frequently came into contact with the Sikhs stated : "The nature of the Seik government is singular, and probably had origin in the unsettled state of the tribe when first established in their possessions. Within his own domains each chief is lord paramount. He exerts an exclusive authority over his vassals, even to the power of life and

[1] *Memoir of a Map of Hindustan or the Mughal Empire.*
[2] *Shah Aulum.*

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death ; and to increase the population of his districts, he proffers a ready and hospitable asylum to fugitives from all parts of India. Hence, in the Seik territories, though the government be arbitrary, there exists much less cause for oppression than in many of the neighbouring states ; and hence likewise the cultivator of the soil being liable to frequent change of masters, by the numerous revolutions that are perpetually occurring, may be considered as one of the causes of the fluctuation of the national force."

Malcolm[1] who travelled in the Sikh country in 1803 writes : "In no country, perhaps, is the Rayat, or cultivator, treated with more indulgence."

The insignificant and obscure places were converted into flourishing towns. By way of illustration only three references, two of the extreme frontiers on the east and the west and one of the centre would suffice. Milkha Singh, the Warden of the Marches in the north-west, "invited traders from Bhera, Miani, Pind Dadan Khan and Chakwal, the trading towns of the Jhelum and Shahpur districts, to settle in Rawalpindi, and under his auspices the town rapidly grew in importance."

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Kalanaur in Gurdaspur district was possessed by Jaimal Singh son of Haqiqat Singh Kanhiya. It lay almost deserted, but Jaimal Singh took great pains to revive its past glory, and succeeded in raising its population to about 400 shops, and 3,000 houses.

In the extreme east on the banks of the Jamuna Rae Singh Bhangi greatly developed Jagadhri which had been completely destroyed by Nadir Shah. There he settled a number of bankers from Najibabad. "Under his protection Nukoor (in Saharanpur district) developed from a comparatively insignificant provincial town into a place of some magnitude."

Internecine warfare

Colonel Polier, a shrewd and careful Swiss officer wrote to Colonel Ironside at Bilgram on May 22, 1776 from Delhi:

"As for the Seiks, that formidable aristocratical republic, I may safely say, it is only so to a weak defenceless state, such as this is. It is properly the snake with many heads. Each zamindar, who from the

[1]*Sketch of the Sikhs.*

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Attock[1] to Hansey[2], Issar[3], and to the gates of Delhi, lets his beard grow, cries Wah Gorow, eats pork, wears an iron bracelet, drinks bang[4], abominates the smoking of tobacco, and can command from ten followers on horseback to upwards, sets up immediately for a Seik Sirdar; and as far as in his power, aggrandizes himself at the expense of his weaker neighbours ; of Hindu or Mussulman, so much the better ; if not, even amongst his own fraternity will he seek to extend his influence and power ; only with this difference, in their intestine divisions, husbandman and labourer, in their own districts, are perfectly safe and unmolested let what will happen round about them."[5] Hugel calls the Sikh soldiers "69,500 tyrants."

In times of peace the Sikhs were never a united people. Hugel says : "Peace brought its unfailing consequences ; divisions and strife between the different misls." Every sardar got accustomed to live at the expense of his Hindu, Muslim or Sikh neighbours.

The people suffered to a certain extent from the internecine warfare of the Sikhs. A number of letters that passed between some Sikh chiefs, bearing no dates, but possibly written in early nineties of the eighteenth century, throw some light on this state of affairs. Below are given some points from them :

"I am often anxious to get news of your side. But I also could not write you owing to a fight between Nanun Mal and the Sikhs of this neighbourhood."

Mahta Sahajram, a resident of Sunam, was deprived of his goods in the vicinity of Kaithal. A request was made to the chief of the place for the restoration of his property.

In a letter written to Lala Khushhal Rae it is stated that in a fight between Raja Sahib Singh and Abdul Ghafur Khan Afghan of Kasur "two or three villages are completely ruined, and God is witness that no trace of any cultivation is left. Brick-buildings have been levelled to the ground."

A letter addressed to Gurdit Singh of Ladwa says : "A number of shawls were brought a few days ago. But owing to the disturbances of the Sikhs the road is closed. Not to speak of human beings even birds cannot fly that way without difficulty. As soon as the danger on

[1]The Attock means river Indus.
[2]It is Hansi, 23 kms from Hisar.
[3]It refers to Hisar.
[4]Hemp, an intoxicating drink.
[5]*Asiatic Annual Register, 1800*, 34-35 ; Forster, i, 334-35.

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the road disappears the shawls will be sent."

Another letter states that four hundred Sikhs and Rajputs drove away the cattle of the villages Arnauli and Bapothkari (?). The zamindars of the neighbourhood gathered in a large number to oppose them. In a fierce fight with arrows, balls and bullets the zamindars were defeated. "The zamindars were so much terrified that with grass between their jaws and leaving their arms behind came to seek pardon declaring they should be considered oxen and be forgiven."

Dalel Singh and Albel Singh, being intoxicated with pride, invested the fort of Kotla with a large number of troops, and severe fighting was going on day and night.

Dasaundha Singh, son of Tara Singh, at the head of a strong force marched from Rahon, and encamped on the banks of the Satluj. This created a great tumult in that district.

Fatah Singh was fighting with Sodhis. Sujan Singh and Hari Singh marched against Fatah Singh and were encamped at Lutheri.

Karam Singh Nirmala, Bhanga Singh and Diwan Singh and others were ravaging the country of Rae Kalha.

Four hundred horsemen of the Ahluwalias lay encamped near the village of Harchowal. They were suddenly attacked by Jodh Singh. A sharp conflict ensued in which the Ahluwalias lost nearly 100 men, while on Jodh Singh's side five Sikhs including the son of Chaudhri Khameru were killed.

A letter addressed to Gurdit Singh says : "I am fighting on the side of Jai Singh (Kanhiya). After subduing a large part of the Jalandhar Doab he has invested the fort of Dasuya which will fall in a day or two. God is kind to us, and friends are joining us from far and near. The Sikh chiefs such as Mohan Singh, Amar Singh, Wazir Singh, Fatah Singh, Baz Singh, Tara Singh, and Jassa Singh were anxious to see Jai Singh. We are resolved to march to Talwara. Kahloris also wish to have an interview with us."

A body of Sikhs attacked Jawalaji in Kangra district. The invaders were defeated after a stubborn resistance. They escaped first to Haripur, and then to Guler where they were plundered of all their goods, horses and elephants, etc.

An eye-witness's account of Cis-Satluj Sikhs

A glimpse into the general administration can be had from the account of an Englishman who travelled from Buriya on the Jamuna to Lahore in 1808. It was Captain Mathews, a Deputy

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Commissary of Ordnance at Fatahgarh on the Ganga. He travelled to Hardwar and crossed the Jamuna at Buriya. He visited Panjab and Kashmir in his private capacity for the sake of amusement. He writes : "On the 15th April last I crossed the Jumna ... and arrived at the town of Borea ... I was much gratified with the general appearance of the country, then in a high state of cultivation, affording satisfactory proof of the fertility of the soil, and industry of the people....

"The people were well dressed, and bore every appearance of health, ease, and contentment ; the effects of a just and good government to which the inhabitants of those districts are happily subject and in proof of this observation, I may mention that during the whole course of my enquiries, I heard not one cause of complaint. The cultivators are assessed to the amount of one half of the produce of their crops, which is paid in kind to the chief, as money currency is very limited throughout the Panjab. Although that is the general rate of assessment, yet every allowance is made to the cultivator for unfavourable seasons, and every species of oppression carefully guarded against by the chief, who, although he is absolute, rules with such moderation and justice, that he is beloved and revered by his people, whose happiness he studies to promote. Though vested with uncontrolled power, his administration of justice is mild and equitable. He seldom dooms to death even for murder ; so lenient is the system of polity, that crimes of that heinous nature are punished by the temporary imprisonment of the criminal, by corporal chastisement, and confiscation of property of every denomination, which the chief converts to his own use. All offences, whether murder or the slightest misdemeanor, are under the cognizance of the kotewall, who submits a detail of all the cases that come before him to the chief, by whom alone punishments are awarded, agreeable to his will. This system of judicial administration seems to have a happy effect, in so much that capital crimes are rarely perpetrated, the police in the different towns is so well regulated that persons of all nations enter them with confidence, and meet with no molestation while they remain. The same attention is shown to an English gentleman as in our own territory, by the kotewall, who readily sends the usual supplies of provision and for which he will receive no payment. He also furnishes a guard of chokeedars at night.....

"This part of the country is so completely divided and sub-divided into small independencies, that many of the villages, according to the

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information I obtained, are governed by two chieftains, one exercising independent jurisdiction over one portion of the inhabitants, and the other over the remainder, each being entirely independent of the other, and this is pretty nearly the state of government throughout the country extending to the Sutledge.

"Mulana and all the country lying between it and Umbala are dependencies of Dia Cour and Roop Cour, relicts of Goorbakhsh Singh and Lal Singh, the deceased zamindars of those districts. They can bring into the field between seven and eight thousand fighting men, horse and foot. Their families reside in a well-built citadel surrounded by a brick wall with round bastions.....The country between Mulana and Umbala appears fertile, and is extremely well cultivated...The inhabitants throughout this country, and as far as the Sutledge, bear a high character for hospitality and kindness to strangers. Their benevolence is not narrowed by bigotry or prejudice, and disclaims the distinctions of religion or complexion. They are particularly attentive to travellers of all castes or countries. The chief of every town makes a point of subsisting all poor and needy travellers from his own funds, a part of which are set aside for that purpose, and when that falls short, from an increased number of indigent claimants, their wants are supplied by a subscription made from the principal inhabitants of the place. It is very pleasing to travel through the towns and villages of this country. The inhabitants receive the stranger with an air of welcome that prepossesses him in their favour. They are, at the same time, courteous and respectful, contrary to what the traveller experiences in Mussulman towns, where he is looked upon with contempt and regarded as an unwelcome intruder. The character of Sikhs had been represented to me in a very favourable light and my own observations confirmed all that I had heard in their favour. They are just and amiable in their social intercourse and affectionate in their domestic relations. One quality particularly raises the character of the Sikhs above all other Asiatics, and that is, their higher veneration for truth. Both as a people and as individuals, they may be considered as much less addicted to the low artifices of evasion, lying or dissimulation, than any other race of Asiatics. Implicit dependence may be placed upon their promise, in all matters either of public or private concern ; and if a Sikh declares himself your friend, he will not disappoint your confidence ; if, on the other hand, he bears enmity to any one, he declares it without reserve.... Upon the whole they are a plain, manly, hospitable, and industrious people, and by

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far the best race I have ever met in India. They have all the essential qualities of a good soldier ; in their persons they are hardy and athletic ; of active habits, patient, faithful, and brave. They are strongly attached to their chiefs, and will never desert them, while they are well treated...."

The same writer later on says : "They make good soldiers, are capable of bearing great fatigue, and can march from 30 to 45 miles a day, for a month together."

"Confiscation of property and imprisonment is in general, as before noted, the only punishment inflicted for wilful murder. This perhaps, in most countries, might render crimes of that sanguinary nature more frequent ; here it does by no means appear to have that effect ; and the penalty is found to be sufficient ; for murders I believe, are far less frequent than in any country equally populous; which I think a convining proof of the good fellowship, subsisting among the inhabitants of these countries, and of the general character they bear for moderation and good manners.....

"At Phagwara on the 27th—Rates of articles : Wheat flour, one maund per rupee ; barley, one maund 10 seers ; gram, I maund ; mote, 1 maund; mungh, 35 seers ; oord, 35 seers ; kund seah or goor, 1 maund 15 seers ; and rice 20 seers per rupee.

"The Singhs being generally devoted to pleasure give every encouragement to the nautch girls.....

"Syphilitic complaints are but very little known in the Punjab.....

"Good camels are procurable here (at Amritsar) in great numbers at 50 rupees each.

"It (Lahore) has a good bazar, but it is not inhabited by people of any wealth or consequence ; Zemaun Shah having on his coming to this place eight years ago, plundered it of thirty lacks of rupees, since which time the principal bankers and merchants have considered Amrutsur the safer place of the two, and reside chiefly at the latter city.

"On the 23rd, I waited upon the Rajah Runjeit Singh who received me very politely, in a grand, lofty, spacious saloon of the palace, all of marble, and inlaid with red and other coloured stones, pretty much resembling that of Agra....."

Civil administration

The Sikhs had established a kind of feudal government in the country. The whole country was parcelled out among eleven big

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houses which had under them a horde of minor sardars. They again commanded numerous subordinates till the common troopers were reached. All of them had a number of villages assigned to them according to their position. The sardar was a petty monarch, and exercised supreme authority. But he was a benevolent despot. His rule did not degenerate into maladministration. A Marathi letter dated 19. 12.1765 stated that the Sikhs were predominant in Lahore and their administration as far as Sarhind was excellent.

Each Sikh sardar was independent of others, and had direct dealings with the neighbouring independent states. Every sardar had some officers to carry on and register administrative and political correspondence with the neighbouring independent Sikh and non-Sikh states. The ecclesiastical affairs were managed by Akalis who were in charge of the Temple and Tank of Amritsar. This "society of religieuse" did not interfere in the temporal authority of the Sikh chiefs.[1]

The village formed the lowest unit of administrative system. From time immemorial the villages in Northern India have had the democratic form of government by their representatives called a *panchayat.* It was a council of five by which not only villages but also castes, trades and even armies were managed. Each village worked like a small republic. At the head of the village was the lambardar who exercised general superintendence over all the affairs of the village on behalf of the panchayat as well as the government. The patwari kept accounts of the lands and registered everything connected with it. The duties of a watchman extended "to the arrest of offenders, general aid to the police, the maintenance of a watch over bad characters and suspicious persons and the general supply of local information." The Hindu children learned a little of reading, writing and Arithmetic from the migratory teachers who lived in a village for a few months and then left for another place. The Mullah or Maulvi lived in the mosque and taught Muslim children Arabic and Quran. Gurmukhi was taught to Sikh boys in gurdwaras.

Sir George Campbell who served for many years in the Cis-Satluj region during the first half of the nineteenth century as a civil and judicial administrator wrote :

"The old Indian system of village communities is yet in full force. Each community has its own internal constitution—each is independent of the other—each pays its revenue to the powers that be and cares

[1]Forster, I, 331.

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not to inquire too curiously the source from which that power was derived."

Debtors and revenue defaulters some times left their parent organisation and joined another misl. They were seldom demanded back, and if demanded were never surrendered even by a petty sardar. Assurance was held out that the money after proper scrutiny would be paid when the delinquent had the means to discharge his obligation. Such persons were given complete protection and could not be molested by the party which had been deserted. Ahmad Shah Batalvi states that Jaimal Singh Kanhiya took special care of his Muslim subjects. When Sayyid Ghulam Ghaus fled from Batala, he took shelter with Mahan Singh Sukarchakia who secured him the restoration of his theological seminary at Batala from Jai Singh Kanhiya.

The Sikh sardars had no prejudice in appointments to important posts against Hindus and Muslims. Diwan Nanun Mal, an Agarwal Bania of Sunam, was the prime minister and commander-in-chief of Patiala State in the second half of the eighteenth century. Ramdas was one of the commanders in the Dal Khalsa who fought so bravely against Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1765 that Qazi Nur Muhammad mentioned him among the most notable generals along with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia.

Every sardar had his own seal to be affixed on orders issued by him. For example Ranjit Singh when he headed only his Sukarchakia Misl issued the following order under his seal in 1795 :

"The protection (*hifāzat*) of Jassowal crops belonging to Baba Ram Das is entrusted to all the sardars of the Khalsa. All the sardars must prevent its being plundered for the happiness of the faqueers (holy men) and our religion."

Seal

Ranjit Singh, Hakumat Singh, and other sardars.

Samvat 1852.

Kardar : The country was divided into districts. The Sikh sardars appointed kardars in each district. They were responsible for the whole administration. They carried on their duties without any interference from the chief. The sardars issued *parwanas* or orders written by a Munshi affixed with their thumb impression and seal.

The revenue system

The main source of income of a misl was land revenue. The head of a misl, himself having been a cultivator, clearly saw the advantages

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of good government. Consequently he treated the husbandman and farmer with great regard and tenderness. James Browne, an eye-witness states that "during any intestine disputes their soldiery never molest husbandman." Another British officer states that even in the Muslim majority region under Sikhs "anything like the cruel poverty experienced by the poor all over Europe is unknown in the Sialkot district." Every parganah was given on a contract. The contractor gave a village on a contract basis to one or more headmen who collected the revenue from each house. The village as a rule paid without hesitation the full amount in time. Trouble arose in case of a famine, floods, heavy rains or an epidemic among men, cattle or crops when the contractor failed in remitting the full amount.

Revenue assessment

The amount of revenue charged from the cultivators depended upon the nature and quality of soil. The following method was adopted to determine it. A certain quantity of soil from a field was weighed. It was mixed with water. The muddy water was sifted through a fine muslin until only sand was left on the cloth. Its weight established the ratio of sand in the soil. Two rupees a bigha was the fixed rate for rich soil, one rupee and a half if it contained one-fourth sand, one rupee if it had a half, and fifty paise when the sand was three-fourths of the quantity.

The mode of collecting revenue was mainly in kind and seldom in the form of money. It was beneficial to the cultivator because he paid a share on the actual produce. The cultivator was allowed to deduct from the gross produce the customary dues of village menials, state officers and others. This generally amounted from 25 per cent to about 40 per cent of the gross produce. The common mode was *batāi*. The share of the sardar varied from one-half to one-quarter of the net produce, mainly depending on the nature of the soil. Some times a capitalist was granted an interest in a village on the condition of providing irrigation to the village. He took his share from the State share. When the produce was increased on account of supply of water, he got an extra share also.

In the Dulle ki Bār or the jungle tract in the modern Lyallpur district of Pakistan, the population was sparse. Its inhabitants were generally robbers, thieves and cattle-lifters. The Sikh government charged from every village a lump sum by way of land tax, house tax, cattle tax, and *faroi* which implied one-quarter of the value of

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property, stolen or seized in the year. On crops of daily consumption such as fodder for cattle or vegetables or fruit, the normal charge was one rupee for a kachcha bigha or a fixed quantity of the produce. A few crops such as cotton, sugarcane, poppy and indigo were paid for in cash. Besides, the Sikh sardars performed the functions of a landlord and helped in repairing and constructing wells. In purely Muslim territories in the north-west some villages were kept under direct control by the Sikh chiefs. They were called *Khalsa*. The others were given in jagirs to most powerful tribes subject to a fixed but nominal tribute. They were known as *Mushakhsah*.

Another method adopted was the *Kankut*. The yield of grain was calculated by the kardar with the assistance of appraisers. They roughly measured the field or guessed the area by the eye. "They can do this with unusual accuracy." Then they "very fairly calculated the produce, which was determined per bigha of the field." They visited each field of each owner, examined the standing crops, and assessed it as equal to so many bighas. The number of bighas and the quantity of grain per bigha was entered against each man. A deduction of one-tenth was made for the village servants, and the remainder was divided between the zamindar and the government in the fixed proportion. Then the price of grain for the harvest was fixed, and the value was calculated. The village money-lender was called upon to advance the whole or a large portion of the amount to the kardar. Afterwards the kardar aided him in collecting the grain.

The general rate on the whole at which a Sikh chief realized his share of the produce was one-third of grain and one-fourth of straw (*bhusa*).

In certain cases *zabti* or *jinsi* was applied at fixed rates, one rupee per kachcha biga. The average income of past years served as a basis for the assessment. Only certain crops of a particular area were subjected to this system. For instance a tenant grew maize, rice, pulses, oilseeds and chari. The last crop being the fodder for cattle was daily consumed. On such crops or others as settled with the proprietor a fixed sum in cash was charged.

A special practice known as *inam* was introduced by the Sikhs. In a newly-acquired territory if a Sikh chief did not find himself strong enough to subdue the cultivators, he would come to terms with the influential men of the locality, granting them half of the state revenues of certain villages or parts of a village, or exempting a plough or two of the cultivation from assessment. These men who were called *chaudhris* or *ināmdārs* undertook to assist the Sikhs in

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ascertaining the resources of the village, in collecting the taxes and in preserving peace and order. The grants were generally maintained during the lifetime of the *ināmdār*. In course of time he became a very useful instrument, and his services were utilized in the detection and prevention of crimes, for managing disorganized estates, in furnishing supplies of provisions and their carriage, repair of roads, and in the construction of many useful public works.

Irrigation

Land revenue rested on plentiful crops. The Panjab received rainfall both in summer and winter. The monsoon season lasted from the middle of June to the middle of September. The autumn crops and early winter sowings depended upon it. The spring harvests were deeply affected by winter rains.

Wells, ponds and tanks were all harnessed for irrigation in one or the other part of the country. Wells were the chief means of irrigation. They were either kachcha or pakka. The kachcha wells had no brick work. They were found in the lowlands near a river, and they lasted for about two years only. A pakka or masonry well was worked by means of a Persian wheel, called *rahat*. It was in general use. From three to five pairs of bullocks were required to work a well continuously for twenty-four hours. At least two men were needed, one to drive the bullocks and the other to divert the water in the fields.

River water was also used for irrigation. There were many cuts in river Chenab near Wazirabad. A number of water-courses intended for irrigation existed in Sialkot district. Such works were excavated by zamindars or by cultivators themselves. The old system of clearing them under the supervision of revenue officers was prevalent. A panchayat of zamindars decided on the number of labourers, which each village had to furnish. A money-payment could be accepted in commutation thereof. The rate was at eight annas an acre. Generally no water rate was charged. The sardar was repaid by the increase of cultivation.

Some use was made of the Hasli Canal also called Shahi Nahar. It was taken off from river Ravi where it entered the plains from the hills. The canal passed by Dinanagar, Majitha, Raja Sansi, Pul Twāif and entered the Shalamar Gardens at Lahore, after covering a distance of 180 kilometres.

The most remarkable of the Canals was known as the Khanwah. It was made in the reign of Shah Jahan. This Canal was of great benefit

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to the district of Gugaira. Its bed had been silted up at places.

The result of the revenue system adopted by the Sikhs is thus summed up : "In spite, however, of its faults, the system appears, upon Mr. Morris' own testimony already quoted, to have been wonderfully successful in promoting the extension of cultivation in a tract which, prior to the period of Sikh rule, was practically an uncultivated waste, inhabited only by pastoral and nomad tribes."

The system of revenue collection suffered from certain defects. The income of the misl varied every year, and it could be determined only at the end of each harvest. Secondly, the sardar had to employ a large number of officials to keep watch over the cultivators at harvest time to check fraudulent practices. Thirdly, the sardars in some cases charged more than their share. Their only fear was that the cultivators as a result of oppression might leave him and go to another chief who was always ready to welcome them.

Land tenures under the misls

When the Sikh sardars occupied Panjab, they retained the same system as had existed under the Muslim government. The head of each misl kept a fairly large part of the country under his own direct rule, and divided the rest among his associate chiefs. The whole territory consisted of taluqas and parganahs. The Sikh sardars did not interfere with old and hereditary land tenures. The rights of the people in Panjab were regulated and protected by customary and moral laws. In the long course of political administration the rights of the peasantry were so well defined and so well formulated by tradition that there was little room for interference. Besides, the inhabitants were tough, hardy and assertive, and they always had the sacred right of rebellion to fall back upon.

In the famine of 1783, villages had been deserted by many people. They had gone away in search of food. Few of the original inhabitants returned to occupy their old homes. Those who returned found their lands cultivated by new immigrants.

New fields or residential sites could be broken out of waste land. There was plenty of land available in the neighbourhood of a village which the villagers owned in common, and cultivators being scarce nobody raised objection to one's acquiring new land. Some difference was, however, maintained between the old proprietary body and such men. The latter enjoyed all the privileges, but they had no voice in the management of the village and in the determination of village affairs. Thus it was

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considered a subordinate tenure as compared to old hereditary lands.

It was this tenure which was sometimes interfered with by the Sikh kardars, who in special cases would appoint a favourite of theirs in newly acquired lands. "Still it is remarkable how numerous are the occupants who have held their land for even two and three generations, and how readily their right to hereditary occupancy has been admitted by the proprietary body in general."

To maintain the integrity of land in the possession of descendents of a common ancestor, who owned and inhabited the village, nobody would sell land to an outsider. The rules of *Haq Shufa* did not permit land to be sold or gifted to an outsider. Consequently sales of land were unknown. If a man could not cultivate as much land as he formerly did and left a good deal of it uncultivated on account of family or financial reasons, the community arranged for the cultivation of the abandoned fields, and the man paid revenues only for so much land as he held in actual occupation.

The Sikhs attached to *maliki* or proprietorship the same ideas as at the present day and the Sikh kardar seldom interfered with the cultivating community which paid as much tax to the state as the mere-tenants-at-will. "As long as the community paid all their taxes," says the compiler[1] "and kept up their estate in a high state of cultivation, he never interfered and left them to their own internal government. Indeed, he would assist them in preserving their organisation, adjusting their shares, and so on. I have known cases where questions of this kind have been taken up by kardars and referred to arbitration."

In certain parts where the Sikh chiefs exacted revenue strictly as in Jhang district, a peculiar type of tenure called *Hathrakhaidar* came into existence. The zamindars made over the proprietary share of the produce along with responsibility for revenue to some influential man whom the Sikhs treated with consideration. The contractor who thus engaged to pay revenue to government in consideration of the proprietary share minus the proprietor's fee was called *Hathrakhnewala*, and the man who made over the produce, and withdrew from the responsibility for the government revenue was known as *Hathrakhwanewala*.

Some changes took place in the hilly areas also. When the hill chiefs were defeated by the Sikhs, many Rajput communities left their land and migrated to other places with their masters. Their fields were taken possession of either by their tenants or colonists from the

[1] *Jalandhar District Gazetteer.*

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surrounding villages. There were five classes of land tenures:

1. *Jagirdari tenures :* The word *jagir* consists of two Persian words, *Ja* meaning place and *Gir* meaning holding. *Jagir* therefore means place holding. Certain areas of the country, parganahs or a group of villages or single villages were granted by the sardar to his subordinate officers or favourites and others to reward for some special service. Jagirs were granted for several purposes. The grantees were generally required to maintain a body of troops properly equipped to preserve order in his own territory and to place it at the disposal of his master in case of need or in an emergency. The number of horsemen and foot soldiers was fixed. They were required to be regular soldiers and not to be merely raw levies. Their horses and weapons must be of good quality. They should be ready to take the field at a short notice. Deception was severely punished. It could involve loss of jagir.

The jagirdar was given the right to collect revenue either in kind or cash as it might suit the convenience of the cultivators. With the proceeds of the land he was to maintain his status and position as well as his contingent of troops, and to meet the expenses of administration. He made his own arrangements for revenue collection. The village communities were strong in the Panjab. They would not tolerate any interference with them by their rulers. The headman of the village collected the fixed amount of revenue from the villagers according to their financial condition and paid it to the jagirdar at the end of each harvest in May and October. The jagirdar would appoint an agent (*sarkardah*) to collect the dues and would distribute them in a settled ratio to himself and his deputies. The Sikhs dealt with every village directly. This checked the tendency of tribal chiefs and others from becoming absolute and powerful landlords. The warlike tribes on the north-west frontier such as Gakhars would not pay the government dues. Thereupon the Sikh sardars would oust such refractory people and would put new men in their places to assure themselves of regular payment. Such actions naturally brought about changes in the form of village tenures and in the proprietary classes.

In the Cis-Satluj region the Rajas and Nawabs as well as Sikh chiefs who had settled there in 1764 exercised sovereign power until they were reduced by the British Government to the position of jagirdars. There were thirty-three leading Sikh families. The Majha sardars established the rights of a landlord over individual villages. The village communities strongly resisted any attempt on the part of a Sikh chief to interfere with their land tenures. The village communities

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willingly offered one-fourth of the produce or income after deducting necessary expenses. Sometimes it so happened that two or more sardars became masters of a single village. In that case they divided the fourth share among themselves. The general rule was that 12.5 per cent or one-eighth of the jagir revenue was paid to the Government. In Rupar and Naraingarh tahsils of Ambala district the commutation paid was 25 per cent for the first generation and 50 per cent for the succeeding generations.

Sometimes it so happened that when a government wanted to reward a person for his meritorious services, it had no money in the treasury. So the easiest plan was to grant him a tract of land and to permit him to collect revenue from there. Most of such assignments developed into landlord tenures. In the beginning a jagir was given for life to the grantee. There were no hereditary jagirdars. As time passed the ruler thought it below his dignity to resume the jagir particularly in view of the grantee's faithful service, and the grant became hereditary and permanent.

The jagirdari system had several defects. In the first place it produced drones or idle vagabonds in the family of the jagirdar. A jagirdar had no aim or ambition to live beyond his jagir. Where the income was large he enjoyed life to the full without any work to do. When the income was small, he starved, but would not attempt to add to his income by lawful means. This generally resulted from the increase in family members which led to fragmentation of their holdings. Drink and debauchery brought about their early death, often without any issue. They hated the life of an actual agriculturist. Idleness and luxury by any means fair or foul were their objectives. Secondly, the jagirs led to constant friction between the jagirdar and the ryot. The jagirdar was often oppressive and unjust. He resorted to heavy exactions and rapacity. The beautiful girls of the poor classes were victims of their lust. With Muslim landlords and their henchmen pederasty was common. People buried their hoards and lived a life of poverty. Evasion of payment was prevalent and a regular conflict existed between the ruler and the ruled.

2. *Pattidari :* Patti means division of a village into ancestral shares. Suppose a single village belonged to one landlord. He had two sons by one wife and three sons by another wife. According to the law of inheritance of *Chundabant* one half of the village went to first two sons, and the other half to the other three sons. Each part of the village and its land was called *tarf*. The first two sons worked in

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common and so did the other three. The son or sons of each again subdivided their inheritance in accordance with the common law. The further subdivision was called patti and the system was known as pattidari. Thus the pattidari implied division of an estate according to ancestral fractional shares under the law of inheritance. Many villages belonged to two or more persons at the first foundation or colonisation or acquisition. In the beginning they owned the village jointly, but later on it was possessed on severalty. It became a pattidari village. The whole village was divided into tarfs. A tarf was divided into pattis. A patti was subdivided into thulas, tolas or thoks, a thula into beris or behris or bheri or bhari, and a beri into khātās or individual holdings. Each share was determined by ancestral right and could be modified occasionally. Sometimes it so happened that one descendent of the same ancestor became a Sikh, the other became a Muslim, while the third remained a Hindu. In such a case one side of the village belonged to the Hindus, the other to the Sikhs and the third to Muslims. But their shares were governed according to the common law of their religion.

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The pattidari tenure could not be sold, but it could be mortgaged. The rules of *Haq Shufa* applied to it. No outsider could purchase it. If he did, the nearest relatives appealed to a court of law and the bargain was at once annulled. If the whole village and its lands were wholly divided it was pattidari. In many cases some of the land was retained jointly ; then it was imperfect pattidari. Each proprietor or co-sharer held certain lands directly in his own possession. The rest was owned jointly or in common. The common land met the revenue charges of all or it was reserved for the purpose of grazing and woodcutting for fuel or repair of agricultural implements, or when the increasing number in the families required further breaking it up for cultivation or residence.

As a rule the country was at first divided into major groups of 84 villages, or 42 villages or 24 villages, called Chaurasi, bialisi, or chaubisi. This division was considered convenient for administrative or military purposes. In course of time the division came into single villages. The ancestral shares were expressed in terms of a rupee or bigha, such as four anna share, one anna share or two paise share and into kanal, marla or biswa shares. When the distribution was to be made, a certain method to determine priority was adopted. Small balls of cow dung were made. Each shareholder put inside it his own special mark, a piece of pottery or a piece of coloured or white cloth

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or a ring. The balls were put in the sun for a while to be dried up. Then all the balls were placed in a basket and well shaken to get the balls mixed up. A little boy or a girl was invited to pick up one ball. Whose lot came first got the first choice of the lands, and the second lot had the second chance after the first, and so on. Nobody grudged or grumbled, and attributed the chance to his luck or fate. Griffin and Massy estimated that in the Cis-Satluj region there were over five thousand pattidars.

3. *Muafi or Inam :* The Sikh sardars practised charity and granted small holdings of land, free of revenue to pious persons, gurdwaras, temples, mosques, schools, tanks and bridges. They were called muafi or inam, and were as a rule permanent and hereditary.

4. *Misldari :* According to the Sikh system of the misl every sardar or head of the misl was bound to grant shares in the booty, in the profits and in the land. Thus every member of the misl got some land and his tenure was called misldari tenure. It also included land granted to outsiders as a reward for some meritorious service. They could transfer their lands within the misl and not to another misl as is wrongly asserted by N.K. Sinha.

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5. *Tabadari :* Non-proprietary, permanent and hereditary residents on land in the village held *tabadari* tenures. The cultivators belonging to this category were called maurusi muzaras. They were not owners of the land, but they could not be ousted under the law of the land. Similarly non-cultivators living in the village held permanent rights in residential plots, though they were not the owners of the land. Their land could not be seized by the actual owners. They could not sell it, but it could be mortgaged. They were not tenants-at-will as it is claimed by N.K. Sinha. In lieu of their holdings the hereditary cultivators paid a certain share of their produce to the landlord. The non-cultivators made some presents to the landlord on festival days as well as on the occasion of a marriage or some other festivity in their own family and in the family of the landlord.

Judicial administration

The judicial system of Sikh misls was rough and ready, rather crude and imperfect. There were no written laws. Nevertheless it was best suited to the temper of the people who demanded quick and impartial judgments.

The petty cases, both civil and criminal, were decided by the village panchayat. It was selected from villagers of the highest reputation for

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honesty and good moral character. They maintained perfect justice and equity in the village. As a panchayat proceeded from the people themselves, its decisions were implicitly obeyed. Though it was not backed by any physical force, yet the weapon of social boycott was so effective and strong that even the most refractory offender quietly obeyed and bore the severest punishment. John Malcolm in 1804 met a Panjabi who had personal experience of British courts in Bengal and Bihar. He told him that Panchayat system was far superior to the English system which was "tedious, vexatious, and expensive, and advantageous only to the clever rogues." A report of the British Government of early nineteenth century stated:

"Injustice or partiality is not charged to these tribunals, as consequent or general, and it is no weak proof in their favour that we found a perfect equality amongst the people in rank or fortune."

Charles Elliot[1], Agent to the Governor-General, in 1824 wrote:

"I cannot call to recollection a single instance, during ten years' experience in these States, of a Punchait being convicted of bribery."

Above the village panchayat there was the court of the kardar. He administered justice according to local customs and traditions or the holy scriptures of Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam.

While administering justice the Sikh chiefs applied much common sense. They examined witnesses and investigated the most complicated cases with firmness of temper and perseverance. They freely mixed with people of all classes and were consequently informed of exact happenings, and no room was left for intrigues and counter-complaints. No man disputed their decisions, which were arrived at with patient care, and delivered with dignity and impartiality. Their simple manners and affectionate personality had a charming effect even on the biggest rogue, who submitted to the punishment awarded to him quietly and submissively.

In cases of theft if the stolen goods were recovered the thieves were fined. They were imprisoned until payment was made in the outer room or verandah of the police station, fort or casle. If after paying his fine he went to rob again and again, he had his right hand cut off. The fines were imposed "not so much according to the gravity of the offence as to the means of the offender." The most serious and extremely heinous crimes were punished with the loss of ears, nose, hands or eyes, though it was rarely resorted to. To trace stolen cattle regular

[1] *Report on Lapsed and Reserved Sikh and Hill States.*

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trackers were employed. When the footprints were traced into the lands of another he was forced either to lead them beyond his territory or to pay for the cattle. Both the parties had to pay for justice, the convict with *chatti* or *jurmana* or fine, and the winner by *shukrana* or thanks-giving-money.

There was no capital punishment even for murder. In such a case one or more girls of the murderer's family were given in marriage to the members of the family of the murdered, with a large sum of money or 125 bighas of land as dowry. This was called *Khunbaha* or the price of blood. Generally the murderer was surrendered to the murdered's family members to retaliate upon him in any way they liked, to be decapitated, drowned, flayed, hanged lynched, roasted, stoned, suffocated. This was called *Gaha*, or self-redress or retributive justice.

In many cases farmers of revenue were the magistrates and judges. In towns courts were held by *adāltis* who were often Musalman Qazis and Hindu Kayasthas rather than Sikhs. Under a big Sikh chief eminent jagirdars were also entrusted with judicial powers, civil, criminal and fiscal; and they exacted fines and lopped off limbs by way of penalties for crimes.

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In large states judges were employed. Bribes were occasionally resorted to. About the time of retirement the judges were compelled to yield to the state a portion of the money believed to have been received by them as bribes. "In Kythul it was and in Patiala it is still the fashion for the judges to pass as many years in imprisonment as on the bench; probably as a means of eliciting for the sircar (Government) a portion of the bribes supposed to have been given."

In cases of injustice or delay, the people took out a procession at midday with flaming torches loudly calling for redress of their grievances. It indicated darkness. Another method was to appear in courts with grass in their mouths. It implied that they had been reduced to the position of animals.

A complaint against a misldar or an appeal against his judgment could be made to the Akalis of Hari Mandar at Amritsar. They called a general assembly of the leading sardars and passed a gurmata declaring the nature of punishment to be imposed upon him.

Women were of good character. Even a century later only one woman in ten thousand was punished with fine or imprisonment. "The proportion of convicts per ten thousand was four for Hindus and Sikhs and ten for Muslims."

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Military administration

Only Sikhs were recruited in the army and no consideration was paid to their original caste or creed. Enlistment was voluntary. When a Hindu young man came to join a Sikh misl, its leader said only a Sikh was recruited. It was essential to take pahul first and grow long hair. When his hair, beard and moustaches had grown sufficiently long, only then he was allowed to join an expedition. Till then he was to stay and serve in the camp, and do odd jobs. The fresh recruits could join any misl and were at liberty to transfer their services to any other misl. No record of a soldier's name, payment, promotion, leave, period of service, was kept.

The Sikh soldiers were given no training in drill, discipline, marching, manner of attack or defence. This deficiency was made up by their religious fervour and national spirit. The troopers were not organised into regiments and battalions. The contingents of individual chiefs, whether big or small, formed the units of the army of a misl. They did not get any salary. They got only a share in the booty. Horses and arms were their personal property. From the conquered country jagirs were given to each sardar according to the number of their horses. Those who looked after sardar's horses and arms were called *bārgir*. They did not get any jagir or a share in the booty. The sardar supplied all their needs. A Sikh who possessed two horses and kept one *bargir*, received two shares. All other horsemen got one share each. This system was called *kathiwand*. The booty obtained by a footman was allowed to be retained by him.

As a rule the Sikh soldier was a horseman. He hated to serve as an infantryman. His duty was not in the field. He was required to keep watch at the headquarters, or to look after a fort or sardar's residence, or at stores at harvest times. His status was inferior to that of a cavalier.

The Sikh soldiers were equipped with offensive and defensive weapons, priming horns, ammunition pouches, two blankets, a grain bag and heel ropes. On a march the blankets were put beneath the saddle. Their weapons consisted of swords, spears, lances, pikes, sabres, two-edged daggers, bows and arrows, muskets, matchlocks, axes, shields and coats of mail. It was estimated that he carried an iron load on his body weighing about twenty kilograms or one and a quarter kachcha maund (*sawa man*). But his main emphasis was on sword (*tegh*), because it formed a part of a Sikh warrior's trinity, Deg, Tegh,

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Fatah. His uniform comprised a turban, a shirt, shorts and tight fitting slippers.

The Sikhs abhorred smoking and snuffing but drank bhang and wine heavily. There was no grading among officers and soldiers, and no titles were granted or received with one exception of Nawab Kapur Singh. The wounded soldiers were given plenty of money for treatment. The property of a deceased in battle was given to his family or relatives, friends or servants.

George Thomas who fought against the Sikhs many a time writes: "When mounted on horseback, their black flowing locks, and half-naked bodies, which are formed in the stoutest and most athletic mould, the glittering of their arms, and the size and speed of their horses, render their appearance imposing and formidable, and superior to meet most of the cavalry in Hindostan." Their horsemanship, frugal habits, power of endurance and rapidity of movements had made them the best soldiers in the world. The prisoners of war were treated with consideration.

The military strength of the Sikh misls is variously estimated. Alexander Dow in 1768 computed it at "60,000 good horse." Another writer in 1772 calculated it in regard to only six misls as follows :

Bhangi misl	10,000
Dallewalia misl	7,500
Karorasinghia misl	12,000
Nishanwala misl	12,000
Phulkian states	5,000
Shahid misl	2,000
Total	48,500

The author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin* in 1782 wrote that "the Sikhs have sent more than once sixty thousand horse in the field." George Forster in 1783 reckoned it at two lakhs. James Browne in 1785 estimated the strength of the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs at 18,225 horse and 6,075 foot, total 24,300, and their full strength including the trans-Satluj Sikhs at 73,000 horse and 25,000 foot. Francklin in 1793-94 put the entire strength of the Sikh army at 2,48,000. George Thomas assessed in 1799 the army of Cis-Satluj chiefs at 27,000, and their total strength at 60,000 horse and 5,000 foot. H.M. Lawrence considered the total fighting strength of the Sikh misls more than 70,000.

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Baron Charles Hugel who stayed with Ranjit Singh in 1835 gives the military power of each misl as follows :

1.	Ahluwalia Misl	3,000
2.	Bhangi	10,000
3.	Dallewalia	7,500
4.	Faizullahpuria	2,500
5.	Kanhiya	8,000
6.	Karorasinghia	12,000
7.	Nakai	2,000
8.	Nishanwala	12,000
9.	Ramgarhia	3,000
10.	Shahid	2,000
11.	Sukarchakia	2,500
12.	Phulkian	5,000
	Total	69,500

H.T. Prinsep agrees with Hugel.

Osborne and Debi Prasad generally agree with Prinsep with slight variation here and there.

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Kartar Singh Kalaswalia[1] gives the following figures :

1. Ahluwalia Misl, 7,000 soldiers, income twenty lakhs.
2. Bhangi Misl, 15,000 horse and foot, revenues one crore and fifty lakhs of rupees.
3. Dallewalia misl, 7,000 soldiers, income about twenty lakhs.
4. Kanhiya misl, 10,000, revenues forty lakhs.
5. Karorasinghia misl, 12,000, income forty lakhs.
6. Nakai misl, 8,000, revenues forty lakhs.
7. Nishanwala misl, 8,000 horse.
8. Ramgarhia misl, 4,000 horse.

In our opinion the total military strength of the Dal Khalsa did not exceed one lakh horsemen.

Guerilla warfare : The Sikhs while fighting against the Mughals and the Afghans generally followed the guerilla method of warfare. Guerilla warfare is a people's war against a stronger enemy, with no military training, inferior weapons and no salary. It involved determined will power, to face starvation, living without sleep, expecting no reward, and giving harassment to the enemy constantly and

[1]*Tegh Khalsa.*

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secretly. A guerilla force was a political army organised on a democratic basis. It had full faith in the success of its cause. It had complete support of the general masses for whom they were fighting. The guerilla fighters were lightly equipped with the barest provisions to sustain them in the struggle. Their strategy was to hit and run called *Dhai Phat* by the Sikhs. The guerilla force was extremely mobile. The great defect in the working of Sikh guerillas was complete lack of intelligence about the enemy's whereabouts.

Artillery : The use of artillery was almost non-existent among the Sikhs. The reason was that heavy cannon could not be carried on by them as fast as they wanted to gallop on their horses. Slow movements did not suit their temperament. They believed in Hitler's blitzkreig. George Thomas who fought many battles with the Sikhs believed the Sikhs had only forty pieces of field guns. The big gun Zamzama served only as a show piece.

It was an age when success in life depended on physical strength, desperate courage, devil-may-care daring, boundless energy and indomitable will power. Such was the attitude of the Sikhs that day or night, rain or fine, burning summer or freezing winter, poverty or affluence were the same to them. Imagine his hardihood. M'Gregor who lived for a long time at the Lahore Durbar observed that the Sikh soldiery possessed "remarkable pedestrian powers," and "obtained for them the cognomen of iron legs." He further remarks that a Sikh soldier could go on foot from Lahore to Amritsar and return in a single night covering a distance of 110 kms. On horseback he could cover in 24 hours about 400 kms or from Delhi to Firozpur, 386 kms.

Shahamat Ali noted that "in enduring fatigue, absence from the prejudices of caste, and patience of discipline, the Sikh is not easily surpassed." He could encamp and decamp in a few minutes.

Monetary system

Each of the eleven misls minted its own coins which were current in their own respective territories. The quality and quantity of metals were kept the same. They were of two types. One of them contained the inscription which appeared on the Sikh coin of Lahore issued in 1765. It ran as follows :

Deg-o-teg-o-fatah-o-nusrat be darang
yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh
(Kettle (free meals), the sword (to protect and punish), victory and

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prompt assistance (are) obtained from Nanak (and) Guru Gobind Singh. The other coin had this verse inscribed on it :

Sikka zad dar har do alam Shah-e-Nanak wahib ast, Fatah tegh Guru Gobind Singh fazal Sachcha Sahib ast.

The bountiful Shah Nanak struck the coin in both the worlds.

Victory attends the sword of Guru Gobind Singh, due to the bounty of true Lord.

Trade and commerce

In those days Panjab was famous for fine cloth, best arms and excellent horses. They were exported to different parts of India.

The trade in the plains of the Panjab was not carried on by any particular route, as it depended on the character of the chiefs through whose territories they passed. But a great part of the trade was conducted from Amritsar to Machhiwara and Patiala from where it trifurcated. Through Hansi and Rajgarh it went to Rajasthan, by way of Thanesar and Karnal to the Ganga Doab, and via Kaithal, Jind and Rohtak to Delhi.

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George Forster in 1783, remarked :

"An extensive and valuable commerce is also maintained in their country, which has been extended to distant quarters of India; particularly to the provinces of Bengal and Behar, where many Sicque merchants of opulence at this time reside."

Trade with Kashmir passed through the northern hills. But this road was in a very bad condition.

Baron Charles Hugel travelled by this road, and he frequently remarked about its bad state. "When the Sutlej is crossed it is hardly possible to conceive, that one can be in a country where any communication whatever is carried on." Further on he says : "The road is so painful in many parts owing to the steepness of the rocks, that I chose rather to ford the stream a second time than brave them." From Jasrota to Jammu the road was rather worse : "The road to Sanba was the worst and most disagreeable I had yet met with in India, constantly leading through the fatal high grass, and sometimes passing over heaps of stones, at others tending downwards into the soft crumbling soil." He was again troubled by the difficult hill pathway : "The road today was really terrible: through a thick jungle; neither mountain nor plain, neither forest nor open field; it is a toilsome, dreary journey, over masses of stones, a zig-zag line from one wretched hamlet to another little or no cultivation is visible and

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what they call fields in tillage are scarcely to be distinguished from heap of stones."

Besides, this road had been made unsafe by the Sikhs. George Forster was travelling from Bilaspur towards Kangra. It was on 29 March, 1783. Two Sikh horsemen plundered the iron merchants "to the amount of one hundred rupees, which is accounted a large sum in these parts. They seized also on a Kashmirian, who was lagging behind, and were in the act of stripping him, when he loudly cried out, (which was not true), that he was my servant, and that I was a person of some distinction.—I procured the Kashmirian's release, as also that of my own servant, who had come up during the parley, and had been likewise taken in custody,—some stray passengers were laid under contribution, from one of whom, an ass-driver, they took a pair of shoes."

George Forster thereupon observes as follows: "It is to be feared that these turbulent mountaineers, the disturbers of their solitary abode, will stir up such commotions in their lands, as to wholly shut up this road, the only secure one from India to Kashmire, or render the passage so precarious, that no advantage will compensate the risk."

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The trade with Central Asia was conducted by Afghans and Baluchis who came in the Panjab in winter with their families and flocks, and returned to their mountain homes on the approach of hot

[1]Sometimes the local chiefs would harass the travellers passing through their territory. Ghulam Muhammad Khan, the envoy of Shah Zaman, had the bitter experience of this nature near Jammu. He wrote: "On the 2nd of Ramzan 1212 Hijri (18th February, 1798) I took leave of his august majesty and left Kabul. I experienced many delays on the road. On the 23rd Zilhija, 1212 (8th June, 1798) I encamped at Mankot (now called Ramkot, (about 80 kms east of Jammu) four days' journey to the eastward of Jammu. On the 24th (9th June) Raja Chatar Singh, the proprietor of the place, a rapacious freebooter, collected a body of about 1,500 men, and formed the daring design of plundering us. On the 25th (10th June) when I received intimation of his design I returned towards Jammu. He attempted to stop us on the road. In short from the borders of Mankot to the frontiers of Behandrata, Raja Bhup Dev's place where we arrived, when one pahar of the day had elapsed, we kept up a continued battle with guns and swords. By God's help I proceeded from thence to a place of safety, without any other impediment to ourselves or baggage. Fortunately the villain failed in his attempt. Thirty-five of the cursed wretches were sent to the infernal regions and of twenty-four champions of the true faith thirteen tasted sweets of martyrdom and the others were wounded. We passed in safety to Jammu. On the 14th Muharram (28th June) I shall proceed from Jammu."

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weather. Some of these men engaged themselves in carrying on trade of petty merchandise. In addition to them the Pawindah caravans entered the Panjab about the same time, and leaving their families in the Derajat advanced into the heart of India accompanied by laden camels with the merchandise of Turkistan and Afghanistan.

While passing through the Panjab the charge of the caravan was as a rule entrusted with the Nanakputras, the descendents of Nanak, who being related to the founder of Sikh religion enjoyed certain privileges. They were respected by the Sikhs in general and the merchants therefore escaped molestation. They never carried arms and strictly forbade the caravan to use them.

The Musalman merchants of Afghanistan and Turkistan being afraid of the Sikhs stopped passing through the Panjab and entered the Ganga valley by marching across Rajasthan and as a consequence the city of Jaipur rose to importance.

GURMATA

The word Gurmata consists of two parts, *Guru* and *mata*. Guru implies spiritual head of Sikh religion, i.e., Guru Nanak as all the succeeding nine Gurus called themselves Nanak. *Mata* means wisdom. It signifies Guru's wisdom expressed through the chosen five Sikhs in a general assembly. Trilochan Singh[1] says that Guru Nanak called Sikhism as Gurmat, and it occurs in the Adi Granth.[2] This word is used, he asserts, over two hundred times in the hymns of Guru Nanak.

Gurmat or the wisdom of the Guru is derived from the Guru himself, the perfect man. Through him gurmat is vested in the assembly of the elect, the Panj Pyaras or the Five Beloved Ones. The gurmata or Guru's wisdom was superior to the wisdom of man and hence it must be accepted as a divine decree.

The first Gurmata

Macauliffe says the Gurmata was established by Guru Hargobind.[3] Cunningham is of the opinion that the first regular gurmata was held in 1762.[4] In fact the first gurmata was held at Chamkaur. Guru

[1]*Guru Nanak's Religion.*

[2]Nanak, I; Rag Gujri, p. 505; Ramkali, p. 904; Maru, pp. 1008-09; Basant, p. 1190; Sarang, p. 1233.

[3]*Calcutta Review*, 1881, p. 63.

[4]*A History of the Sikhs*, 108.

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Gobind Singh reached there on 22 December, 1704. He had with him his two elder sons, five beloved ones and thirty-five other Khalsa, total forty-two. In the day's fighting, both the princes, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, three of the five beloved ones, and thirty-two other Khalsa laid down their lives at the altar of faith and freedom. The Guru was left with five disciples only. He was contemplating to join the battle of life against his numerous opponents the next morning. In that event his martyrdom was sure and certain.

The five Sikhs were opposed to this course. Having Guru Gobind Singh sitting before them, the five Sikhs thought of Guru Nanak and sought his divine wisdom at this crisis. The advice revealed that Gobind Singh's life must be saved. With this gurmata they told him that at the moment they were the Guru and Gobind Singh was a Khalsa. The order was that he must escape in the interest of the Panth. The Guru tamely submitted.

The declaration of regular Gurmatas, 1708

The formal declaration of regular gurmatas took place at Nander in 1708. Five days before his demise, the Guru held a farewell durbar at Nander on October 3, 1708, in the presence of the holy Granth. This durbar was attended by all the Sikhs present at Nander including Bhai Mani Singh and Bhai Nand Lal Goya. The Guru declared that guruship was hereditary in his family, and he had lost all his children. In order to avoid any future family feuds as had taken place at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's succession, and to check disruptive tendencies in the Panth he announced the abolition of the guruship in a human being, and invested it in the holy Granth for all times to come. The Guru affirmed that all the affairs of the Panth would be regulated by a council of five beloved ones chosen for the time, meeting before the sacred scriptures (Panchon men Parmeshar). Their verdict would be called gurmata. It was to be regarded as the judgment of the Guru. It was to be adopted by the assembly unanimously. Its execution was binding upon the whole Panth. Any infringement was to be considered sacrilegious.

Its significance: There was no regular machinery to enforce a gurmata. It represented the will of the whole community. It was a commandment of the Guru, and no sardar or prince, however powerful, could dare defy it. They accepted a gurmata without demur for fear of losing loyalty and support of their followers, and popularity

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among the Sikhs as a whole. Every misl owed allegiance to the Panth and Sarbat Khalsa.

The main problems concerning the entire community were discussed in the presence of the Adi Granth in a general assembly at Amritsar before Akal Takht on the occasions of Baisakhi, Dasahra and Diwali. This assemblage of the Sikhs was called Sarbat Khalsa. It was looked upon as a representative gathering of the entire Sikh community. Its general functions were to chalk out a particular course to be adopted to meet an exigency; to elect a leader for organising an expedition, to form a combination of two or more misls, or of the entire Dal Khalsa; to resolve disputes among Sikh sardars, to decide questions of foreign policy, to settle matters regarding succession of the head of a misl, to settle plans of campaigns, territorial acquisitions, and punishment of their enemies, erection of gurdwaras, and restoration and rebuilding old ones. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Gurmatas became a regular feature in the life of the Sikhs.

Regular gurmatas were held three times in the year. The gurmatas passed on Baisakhi day related to the next year's programme, gaining territory, realizing tributes, building forts, constructing katras or residential quarters at Amritsar, and erection and beautification of sacred shrines. The gurmatas passed on Dasahra day concerned military matters, checking the progress of the invaders who visited this country in winter, and leading expeditions into distant places. The gurmatas approved on the Diwali day pertained to the realization of rakhi or kambali and improving the financial condition of the Panth. Urgent cases could be taken up at any time and at any place.

One such gurmata is mentioned in 1761, when Ahmad Shah Durrani was going back after defeating Marathas. The Sikhs called the Afghan invaders Ghilzais. They were carrying off a large number of women as slaves. Ahmad Shah had passed Sialkot. The Sikhs gathered at Amritsar, and held a gurmata. They resolved on a Dharam Yudh or holy war. "*Asān desh di dhiyān, bahnān kiwen jāne den.*" Numerous Hindu young men also joined them in this holy war. A large number of small bands were organised. All dashed after the invaders. They came upon them while they were crossing river Jehlam. About 30,000 women who were still on the eastern side of the river were rescued. A large quantity of booty also fell into their hands. Many Afghan guards were slain.[1]

[1]Kartar Singh Kalaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, 167-69.

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A political gurmata was held when Jawahir Singh, the Raja of Bharatpur, asked for Sikh help. It took place in 1764 near Barari Ghat on the Jamuna in the presence of Adi Granth.

The procedure of holding a regular gurmata was as follows. The sardars with most of their subordinate sardars at the head of a strong contingent of troops came to Amritsar. The chiefs put up in their *bungahs* or hospices built around Hari Mandar and the holy tank. These were their personal places of residence when they visited Amritsar. In addition to the *bungah*, every leading sardar had his *katra* or residential quarters for their subordinate sardars with a bazar attached to it to supply provisions and other articles of daily use and necessity to the members of his misl. The troops of every misl encamped outside the city at particular places reserved for them.

A little before the time fixed for a gurmata the sardars followed by their close associates offered *nazars* at the Hari Mandar. From Hari Mandar they moved to the open space before Akal Takht. Each greeted the other and embraced cheerfully. All mutual discords and differences were completely forgotten under the shadow of their sacred shrines and all-pervading spirit of Gurus. According to M'Gregor there was all harmony and peace. The Adi Granth and Dasam Granth were placed before them. Everybody paid homage to the holy scriptures. The sardars took their seats. Their companions sat behind them. A large quantity of sweet bread kneaded in wheat flour, clarified butter and *gur* and baked on fire was brought in a huge basket covered with a piece of cloth. The basket was placed before the Granths. The whole assembly stood up. An *Ardas* or prayer was said by Akalis. After prayer all sat down. The sweet bread was distributed among the congregation, and all ate it joyfully.

The Akalis then announced, "Sardarji, this is a Gurmata." At this all rose, said the prayer again, and sat down. A sardar stood and said: "The sacred Granths are before us. Let us swear by our scriptures to forget all internal disputes and be united in one body." Thereupon all animosities disappeared for the time being and an atmosphere of pure patriotism prevailed. All the big sardars declared that they were completely united for the Guru and in the service of the Panth. Problems facing the Panth were raised one by one. Discussion was there ample and plenty. During the discussion if any particular point struck any member of a misl, he would convey it to his chief to bring it to the notice of the congregation, though any body could speak directly. After prolonged debates and arguments five beloved ones

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were chosen on the basis of service and devotion to the Panth. They sought divine light to guide them. They whispered among themselves and came to a unanimous decision. The spokesman of the five beloved ones communicated their verdict to the presiding officer of the Akal Takht. He announced it, and it was unanimously accepted without any note of dissent. There was no question of passing a gurmata by a majority of votes. After passing a gurmata a committee was appointed to see that the gurmata was properly executed.

Gurmatas were not passed one by one concerning each problem. A sardar could not be represented by proxy. Attendance was not compulsory, but all the sardars attended it in the general interest of the Panth. The gurmatas flourished for nearly one hundred years. The earliest political gurmata was held by Banda Bahadur before the battle of Sarhind in 1710. The last political gurmata was held by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809 before signing the Treaty of Amritsar.

Reasons for discontinuance of Gurmatas: There were several reasons why Maharaja Ranjit Singh discontinued the political gurmatas.

1. Foreign rule and foreign invasions had come to an end, and the main problem for discussion at a gurmata had disappeared.

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2. The misls were in the process of dissolution. The principle of equality which was the chief basis of the misl system was in a state of liquidation.

3. In the Sikh state of Ranjit Singh about half of the population was Hindu, one-third Muslims and the rest Sikhs. A gurmata could be passed at Akal-Takht by Sikhs alone. Its execution would have been deeply resented by the vast majority of the population.

4. The foreign policy of the state had become complex and intricate. It could be tackled by experts alone. It was no longer a matter of making solemn promises in writing and breaking them in the same breath as it happened in the case of a treaty with Mahadji Sindhia, Regent of the Mughal Empire, in 1785.

5. In order to preserve peace and order in the country and to establish a stable government, it was essential that the administration should be secularised. Participation by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs on the principle of equality was absolutely necessary. Though illiterate, Ranjit Singh knew that Akbar's policy of secularisation had consolidated the Mughal Empire, while Aurangzeb's theocracy had broken it. Ranjit Singh wished to place the Sikh state on a firm foundation. He did not like to be the monarch of Sikhs alone, but a common ruler of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The Sikh kingdom of

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Ranjit Singh was lost by the Sikhs themselves and not by any revolts of Hindus and Muslims.

Thus Ranjit Singh was justified in stopping the gurmatas for political and military purposes. Afterwards the gurmatas concerned only religious and social problems.

AKALIS

The Akalis or Immortals formed a purely religious body in Sikhism. They took upon themselves the duties of Censors in order to maintain the purity of Sikh religion and unity in the Panth. They adopted an aggressive attitude and acknowledged no mundane authority. They formed the militant Sikh sect. They decided any point of religious conflict by holding a gurmata before the Akal Takht. They were the armed guardians of their sacred shrines at Amritsar. Though the Akalis formed the fighting body of the Khalsa, yet the most reckless among them were called Nihangs or crocodiles.

Some of the European writers have nothing but contempt for them. Steinbach (p. 104) calles them a "worthless race of people under the sun." Emily Eden (p. 404) dubs them "without any exception the most insolent and worthless race of people of all India." Honigberger (pp. 48-49) says that an Akali tried to force his way into Maharaja Ranjit Singh's tent through a private door. A sentinel on duty stopped him. The Akali immediately cut off the sentinel's arm. Under Ranjit Singh's orders his ears, nose and hands were cut off. He got his nose treated in the hills and got it artificially restored so well that nobody could detect it was not the original one.

Schonberg (pp. 328-29) narrates an incident. One day General Avitabile was driving in an open carriage at Lahore. A Nihang showered abuses on him. The General stopped and asked him not to use such filthy language. He paid no heed to his warning. He was arrested and taken to the General's camp. "Here he was helped to an abundant meal of mud and dismissed."

Impact of Misls on history

By displaying a rare spirit of adventure against the persecutors of their faith, by supporting the cause of the poor and helpless, and by preserving social and economic equality in their ranks, the Sikh misls made Sikh religion popular with the young and daring men in villages. The sturdy, plodding race of hereditary cultivators and artisans, whose diligence had built up the agricultural system of the Panjab,

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became as skilful in wielding the sword and musket as they were in the use of the plough and the sickle. Their bravery and heroism made the Sikh religion a mass movement in the Majha or Central Panjab. They developed the Sikh character to dizzy heights, and added some of the noblest features to their community life. The contemporary writers Ghulam Husain and James Browne stated that wherever Hindu villagers underwent government oppression, they grew long hair, shouted *Akal, Akal*, took *pahul* and became Sikhs, and their number increased by leaps and bounds.

The valiant Sikh soldiers bravely faced the armies of the Mughals, Marathas and Afghans without any fear. They levied a cess called *Rakhi*, and guaranteed protection to the inhabitants from the banks of the Indus to the banks of the Jamuna. The Sikh misls produced a deep effect on all the political powers in India at the time.

1. *Ahmad Shah Durrani :* The Mughal Government came to an end in the Panjab when this province was occupied by Ahmad Shah in 1752. The Abdali left no stone unturned in suppressing the Sikh movement, but he miserably failed in this attempt. The Sikhs converted the Panjab into "the soldiers' land" and erected a bulwark of defence against foreign aggression," the tide of which had run its prosperous course for the preceding eight hundred years. Henceforward the Panjab ceased to be the "jumping-off ground" of the foreign invaders of Northern India. This is the greatest service rendered by the Sikh misls to this country, and this is the most glorious record in India's foreign policy.

2. *The Rohillas :* Najib-ud-daulah, a Rohilla soldier of fortune had risen to the supreme position of being the viceroy of Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Dictator of the Mughal Empire. He was the bitterest foe of the Indians freedom struggle which had taken the form of the movements of Marathas in the south, of the Jats in the centre round about the two imperial capitals of Delhi and Agra, and of the Sikhs in the Panjab. The Rajputs once in the forefront of India's van for independence, and the bravest of the brave, had been emasculated by the Great Mughals. Najib-ud-daulah was mainly responsible for the crushing defeat upon the Marathas at the third battle of Panipat in January, 1761. Suraj Mal, the greatest Jat Raja of Bharatpur, had been killed at Delhi in a battle with Najib on December 25, 1763. After his death the Jat power began to decline. Najib utterly failed in overcoming the Sikhs. He was so much shaken in his mind that he thought of seeking his political salvation by making a pilgrimage to

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Mecca or by retiring into some obscure retreat. He openly confessed himself beaten in a letter addressed to the Queen-mother of Shah Alam II. Najib wrote to the Dowager Queen :

"To this hour her servant has manifested unshaken loyalty to the House of Timur. And his services, however poor or inconsiderable, have yet been zealous and sincere. Hitherto he has preserved the Royal domains, and what he has been able to give he has given. But now Her Majesty must forgive her servant and not expect what he has no ability to perform. The Sikhs have prevailed and they have written to all the tribes in general to join them, pointing to his weakness and encouraging them to cast him out. Her Majesty will consider him now as one unable to provide for his own security here....." He left Delhi for Najibabad and died at Hapur in October, 1770.

In September, 1777, Zabita Khan, the son and successor of Najib-ud-daulah, made complete submission to the Sikhs, so much so that he publicly declared himself a convert to Sikhism and assumed the name of Dharam Singh. This memorable event gave rise to the following proverb still current in the Saharanpur district :

Ek Guru ka do chela, Ādhā Sikh, ādhā Rohilla

(The Guru's one disciple was half Sikh and half Rohilla.)

Twelve years later in April, 1789, Zabita Khan's wife and his son Ghulam Muin-ud-din Khan alias Bhambu Khan took shelter with the Sikhs. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had granted him the revenues of five villages amounting to Rs. 7,000 a year. He remained with him until Jassa Singh's death in 1803.

3. *The Jat Rajas of Bharatpur :* Several Indian powers sought an alliance with the Sikhs. In January, 1765, Jawahir Singh, son of Raja Suraj Mal of Bharatpur, offered to take into his pay 12-15,000 Sikhs. The Dal Khalsa lay encamped at Barari Ghat on the Jamuna, 20 kms north of Delhi. Jawahir Singh went to their camp. The Sikhs did not allow the driver of the elephant on which Jawahir Singh was seated to come close to their camp. He dismounted. The Raja was accompanied by his huqqa-bearer. He was driven away with insult and abuse. The Raja was forced to walk. The congregation received him sitting. The Sikhs held a gurmata and agreed to help Jawahir Singh.

In December, 1765, Jawahir Singh attacked Jaipur and employed 25,000 Sikhs in his service. Raja Madho Singh of Jaipur heavily bribed the Sikhs, and they deserted the Jat Raja. In March, 1768, Jawahir Singh again engaged 20,000 Sikhs at seven lakhs of rupees per mensem, and Madho Singh's forces took to flight. On the death

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of Jawahir Singh in 1768, the throne was contested by his two brothers, Nawal Singh and Ranjit Singh. In January, 1770, Ranjit Singh employed Sikhs. At their approach Nawal Singh fled away. The Sikhs pursued him up to Chunar, 748 kms from Delhi and 32 kms before Mughal Sarae. On 24 February, 1770, in the battle, the entire Maratha cavalry of Nawal Singh was cut to pieces, and his French General Rene Madec's three companies out of six were completely wiped out.

4. *The Mughal Emperor :* The Sikhs frequently raided Delhi and crown-lands. On 11 March, 1783, the Sikhs entered the Red Fort and in the Diwan-e-Am seated Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the throne. The Emperor was so terrified that he entrusted the control of the capital to Baghel Singh Karorasinghia and permitted him to build seven gurdwaras, in some places by demolishing mosques. Baghel Singh served as the Kotwal of Delhi for nine months and completed the construction of seven gurdwaras. As the crownlands were plundered by the Sikhs, the Emperor's source of income ceased. He had seen how ably Baghel Singh had controlled Delhi and protected it from the raids of the Sikhs and others. He was prepared to appoint him as regent of the empire, but he showed unwillingness to serve under a Muslim.

5. *Oudh :* In 1774 the Nawab of Oudh had annexed Rohilkhand. He wanted to occupy the districts of Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar in 1776. Twice did he seek Sikh help in this objective by offering to pay a sum of seven lakh rupees immediately, seven lakhs more on the actual seizure of the districts, and one half of the revenues to be paid to the Sikhs annually in perpetuity. The Sikhs did not agree. The Sikhs plundered Rohilkhand time and again. In January, 1783, George Forster recorded :

"Being at that time in Rohilcund, I witnessed the terror and general alarm which prevailed amongst the inhabitants, who, deserting the open country, had retired into forts and places inaccessible to cavalry."

In January, 1785, they again raided Rohilkhand and obtained booty from Chandausi worth about one crore of rupees.

6. *The British Government :* On January 3, 1791, the Sikhs captured Lieutenant Colonel Robert Stuart, in charge of Anupshahar Cantonment on the Ganga. He was kept in the fort at Thanesar for ten months. Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, had failed to secure his liberty by personal exertion. He was released on October 24, 1791, on receiving a ransom of Rs. 60,000.

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7. *The Marathas :* The Marathas led many expeditions against the Cis-Satluj Sikh chiefs, but failed to subdue them. Mahadji Sindhia, the Regent of the Mughal Empire, formed a treaty of friendship with them on 9 May, 1785.

8. *The Hill Rajas :* The Sikhs dominated all the hill states lying in the lower ranges of the Himalayas between the Jehlam and the Ganga and realized tribute from all of them.

9. *Timur Shah Durrani :* Multan had been conquered by the Sikhs in 1772. Timur Shah Durrani arrived at Peshawar in September, 1779. He sent a deputation under Haji Ali Khan to persuade the Sikhs to vacate Multan. The meeting took place at Kali Sarae near Hasan Abdal. The envoy threatened the Sikhs with dire consequences. The Sikhs tied him to a tree and shot him dead. His companions were allowed to depart and report it to the Shah. The Shah conquered it in 1779.

10. *Shah Zaman of Kabul :* Shah Zaman the ruler of Afghanistan, was at Lahore in December, 1798. On 15 December, 1798, he deputed his Diwan, Atma Ram, with costly khilats and presents to Amritsar, to induce the Sikh sardars to let him proceed to Delhi unimpeded. The Sikhs totally rejected the proposal and the Shah returned to Kabul in disappointment and despair.

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Dissolution of misls inevitable

Historically speaking the existence of the misls was to be a temporary phase. This system flourished as long as the foreign enemy was in the country, and there was booty to acquire or lands to conquer. After the last invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1767, the Sikhs had no common enemy and no common danger to face. The later invasions of Ahmad Shah, Timur Shah and Shah Zaman resembled raids and produced little effect on the Sikhs.

The Ganga Doab and to some extent Rohilkhand served as a fertile field to acquire booty. This source was also closed with the British conquest of the Ganga Doab, Agra and Delhi. As regards acquisition of country, the Sikhs had no desire to go out of the Panjab. A large part of it had already been occupied by them. There were some places under Muslims chiefs. They saved themselves by seeking help of one or more misls against the aggressor. Thus there remained no lands to conquer except those of their fellow sardars.

Besides the old barons had spent all their lives under the shadow of swords, fighting against their enemies and in making raids. Cons-

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tant warfare had become a regular and essential part of the daily life of these men of the blade. They had plenty of blood, plenty of iron and plenty of pride in them. It was almost impossible to sink into a life of quiescence and tranquillity. War was the salt of their life. They could not live without it. This led to discord, disorder and disruption.

The Sarbat Khalsa or the general assembly of the Khalsa at Amritsar lost its control over the sardars. In them the sense of brotherhood had disappeared. The sardars began to oppose one another. The central organisation of the Akalis at Amritsar became powerless to hold the sardars in check. The gurmatas lost their moral force. Their meetings became few and far between. Fewer chiefs attended them. The absentee powerful chiefs resisted their decisions. The sardars wanted power on top without bottom. But they could not have top without bottom. The bottom was love and service of man, Guru and God.

George Forster in his penetrating foresight correctly predicted the rise of an ambitious Sikh chief who would weld the misls into monarchy. Little did he know that such a chief had already born about two years before his prophecy.

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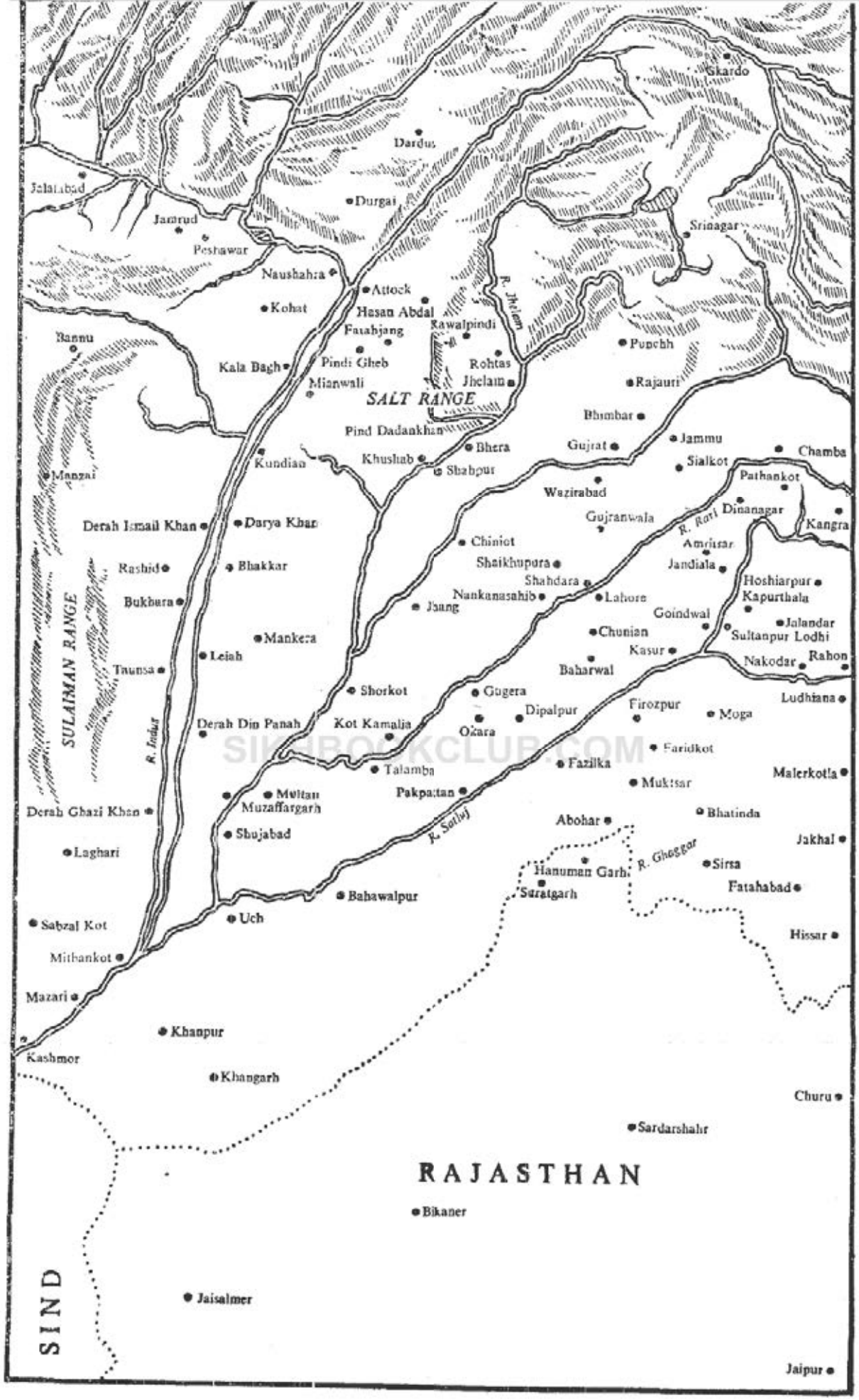
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Part Three

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The Invaders' Obituary

CHAPTER 17

The Final Phase of Ahmad Shah Durrani

Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India eight times and made three border raids. The first four invasions were made against the Mughal Empire. He succeeded in occupying Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Province, Panjab, Kashmir and Sarhind province. His dominions in 1757 spread over a vast territory extending from Hindukoh to the river Jamuna near Karnal. He was determined to suppress indigenous nationalist movements in India. During his fourth invasion he tried to crush the power of the Jats of Bharatpur, but failed. The fifth invasion was led against the Marathas who were completely routed in the third battle of Panipat in January, 1761.

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Abdali's main aim was to reach Delhi and secure Indian riches to preserve his vast empire. Afghanistan was a poor country, and gold was the god of Afghan people. The Sikhs in the Panjab stood in his way. They did not allow him a free passage to the capital of India. Hence he carried on the last three invasions against the Sikhs. In his sixth invasion he inflicted an overwhelming defeat on the Sikhs at Kup near Malerkotla on 5 February, 1762, and killed about 25,000 Sikhs in the battle. He stayed in the Panjab till the end of the year to see the effect of his victory over the Sikhs. While the Marathas had taken ten years to recover their losses only partially, the Sikhs took only ten weeks to make up their losses fully, and regain their spirit of defiance. They rose like a suppressed flame with greater vigour, and repulsed all his governors and the Abdali himself.

During this campaign Ahmad Shah destroyed their sacred buildings at Amritsar, the holy of the holiest places of the Sikhs, and allowed no gurdwara or a Sikh temple to stand in the Panjab. The Sikhs punished their enemies and converted mosques into stables or stores of fodder for animals. They demolished no mosque and no tomb, except those which were erected by pulling down gurdwaras.

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Just compare the views of a Sikh journalist historian and a Muslim historian.

Khushwant Singh[1] condemns Banda Bahadur, the founder of political power of the Sikhs and the first builder of the Sikh state :"..... the spirit of Punjabi nationalism which had almost been killed by Banda."

Syad Muhammad Latif[2] writes :

"The sacrilegious outrages committed by the Sikhs on the Muslim mosques and shrines were now avenged by the demolition of the most sacred edifices of their most sacred city. The law of retaliation was carried out to the letter. The indignities offered to the Mahomedan religion, were, in this instance, as in the others, repaid with compound interest. The outrages suffered by the Mahomedans could not have been atoned for except by the blood of the offenders. Moreover, nothing could have proved so gratifying and satisfactory to them as the carrying out of the work of iconoclasm, since their unitarian faith cannot tolerate idolatory. There can be no doubt that the Abdali acted in strict conformity with the law of his religion, and was actuated by a sense of duty, when he undertook the destruction of the sanctuaries of the Sikhs."

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In his seventh invasion the Sikhs dogged his steps from close quarters from the Ravi to the Jamuna and back again. They compelled him to return homeward from Kunjpura near Karnal as poor as he had come. He had failed to break their power with his full army unencumbered. He realized that the Sikhs would take away most of his booty if he would go to Delhi. Besides the loss of goods, thousands of his men and horses would lose their lives in Sikh attacks while returning. So it was useless to plunder the capital to enrich the Sikhs or as the proverb says to rob Peter and pay Paul. Otherwise the road to Delhi only, 125 kms distant lay clear without any obstacle. He had made every effort to win over the Sikhs even by offering the governorship of the Panjab to Lahna Singh Bhangi who had rejected the proposal, saying he would not accept the gift from a Muslim against the gift of the Guru.

About the seventh invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1764-65, Syad Muhammad Latif[3] writes :

[1]Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, I, 1469-1839, 183.
[2]Syad Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, 284.
[3]ibid, 286.

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"After a short stay at Lahore, the Shah proceeded to the Sutlej, where he levelled the houses of the Sikh chiefs to the ground. In numerous villages the standing wheat crops were burnt, or otherwise destroyed and the Sikh places of worship plundered or desecrated. For two months he continued to ravage the countries south of Lahore."

During his last invasion he advanced upto Ismailabad, a small village, 32 kms south of Ambala on the road to Pehowa. This time also he spared no pains in beating down the Sikhs, and having failed in this attempt he coaxed, cojoled and implored the Sikh chiefs not to obstruct him in his march to Delhi. He even offered the government of the Panjab to them under his suzerainty. But all this was in vain. The Sikhs were not prepared to make peace with him under any circumstances. In sheer disappointment and despair he suffered the anguish at the sight of the richest part of his kingdom slipping out of his hands. This is the greatest service the Sikhs have rendered to India.

Of his three border raids the first took place in winter of 1768-69. He advanced upto the western bank of river Jehlam. The Sikhs attacked him on all sides frequently. His soldiers bitterly complained as no booty fell into their hands. He was compelled to retire. A greater misfortune overtook him in the Khaibar Pass. At a distance of 20 kms from Peshawar lies Jamrud which has a strong and tall fort and a spacious sarae. Five kilometres from there is situated village Qadam. The Khaibar Pass begins from here. It is 53 kms long and lies between six to seven thousand feet high mountains. It is on the whole narrow, at some places not more than three metres wide. The tribes attacked him frequently. His entire camp was plundered. Many of his commanders and troops were killed. The Shah and his prime minister, Shah Vali Khan, in a miserable condition hurried back to Kandhar.

In December, 1769, he came again. He halted at Peshawar and could not summon up courage to face his long-haired enemies. He returned to Kandhar in sheer frustration in January, 1770. His troops were in revolt for want of payment and would not let him live in peace in his capital. In order to give them some satisfaction he reached Peshawar in the burning hot weather in June, 1770, against his usual practice. His will power again broke down and he left Peshawar for Kandhar soon afterwards. This was his last attempt to invade India.

His commander-in-chief, Jahan Khan, died on 14 March, 1770. His

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all-powerful deputy in India, Najib-u-daulah, passed away on October 31, 1770. *Bengal Select Committee Proceedings*[1] state : "A rumour prevails that Ahmad Shah Abdali is advancing towards Hindustan." In August, 1771, there were strong rumours of Ahmad Shah's arrival in the coming winter. General Barker expressed satisfaction in a letter to Jhanda Singh Bhangi that the Shah would not be able to cross the Indus for fear of the Sikhs.

Ahmad Shah Durrani's Death, 1772

Ahmad Shah's health considerably declined early in 1772. Realizing that his end was near, he summoned his chiefs to an assembly, and nominated his son Timur Shah his successor. From Kandhar, he retired to Toba Maharuf in the Achakzai country in the Sulaiman Mountains, where the summer was cooler. Toba is an irregular range of rocky mountains, estimated to have an elevation of nearly 9,000 ft. There are many pleasant spots in these mountains. Conolly states that "between the long and severe winters which the inhabitants of these hills experience they enjoy a very delicious climate. The tops of the hills are table-lands which are greatly cultivated by means of springs everywhere in abundance." "The water was like running diamonds, the plentiful fresh verdure as a carpet of emeralds, and the air like the odour of musk."[2] Here he died at Murgha on 14 April, 1772.[3]

Ahmad Shah was buried in his favourite city of Kandhar. His tomb is octagonal in form. It stands in the heart of the city, surrounded by grassy lawns, apartments and mulberry trees and is one of the most interesting and imposing objects of the town. It cost about Rs. 90,000 in those days when one rupee was equal to at least fifty rupees of today. It has a gilt cupola of nearly 10 metres in diameter and 19 metres in height. There is a gallery around it and minarets at angles. The ceiling is gilded. The corners are covered with Arabic inscriptions which contain numerous blessings on the soul of the king. The Persian inscription on the grave gives the date of his death :

[1]November 23, 1770, p. 199.

[2]Thornton was equally fascinated with this region.

[3]*Gulgasht-e-Panjab*, 17b, says that he died of the cancer of the nose.

Some writers place Ahmad Shah's death in June, 1773. The inscription on the grave of Ahmad Shah at Kandhar says : "When he died, the Hijri year was 1186." This year lasted from April 4, 1772 to March 24, 1773. *Delhi Chronicle*, p. 250, says that Ahmad Shah Durrani died on April 14, 1772. *Husain Shahi*, 88, supports this date.

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"The king of high rank, Ahmad Shah Durrani,
was equal to Kisra (Cyrus) in managing the
affairs of his government.
In his time, from the awe of his glory and greatness,
the lioness nourished the stag with her milk.
From all sides in the ears of his enemies there arrived,
a thousand reproofs from the tongue of his dagger.
The date of his departure for the house of immortality
was the year of the Hijra 1186.

His personality, character and achievements

Alexander Dow painted the following picture of the Durrani monarch in 1768 : "This prince is brave and active, but he is now in the decline of life. His person is tall and robust, and inclinable to being fat. His face is remarkably broad, his beard very black, and his complexion moderately fair. His appearance, on the whole, is majestic and expressive of an uncommon dignity and strength of mind. Though he is not so fierce and cruel as Nadir Shah, he supports his authority with no less rigour, and he is by no means less brave than that extraordinary monarch. He, in short, is the most likely person now in India to restore the ancient power of the empire, should he assume the title of king of Delhi."

Ahmad Shah Abdali was one of the greatest conquerors who have ever appeared in Asia. His chief contribution lies in the fact that he was the creator of an independent Afghanistan. A conquered people who had remained subject for centuries were converted by his genius into conquerors, and the nation which he called into life has existed during the past two hundred years, in spite of numerous trials and tribulations it had to face partly from foreign aggression and partly from internal turmoils. At the time of his death he left a vast empire to the Afghans, extending in the north from the Oxus and mountains of Kafaristan to the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf in the south, and in the east from the mountains of Tibet and Kashmir to Khorasan, Iran and Kerman in the west. It consisted of Kabul, Kandhar, Iranian Khorasan, Balkh and Khulam in Central Asia, Kashmir, Peshawar, Multan, Sind and Baluchistan in India.

He adopted a different policy regarding various parts of his kingdom. In his dealings with Afghans and Baluchis he pursued the principle of conciliation. He tried to please and win over the people first and the chiefs afterwards. The chiefs who could not be reconciled were

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reduced by force, being "more severe than the severest" according to Latif, and then treated them kindly. He won over the people by giving equal consideration to the many tribes of Afghans, and to several tribes of doubtful origin, but speaking the Pashto language, specially those living in the Farrah district and along the Helmand river who were connected with the genuine Afghans.

Besides, he enforced many humane reforms in order to win their goodwill and co-operation. He stopped the form of punishment requiring the loss of limbs, such as nose or ears, and forbade his successors to revive this cruel practice. The Durranis were required not to marry their girls to strangers, and were advised to ally themselves with one another. With a view to keep the patrimony intact he issued instructions that in future the family property should be inherited only by the sons.

The daughters, who had upto that time received a share, were to be entirely excluded. Further, at the death of an Afghan, the widow was to be married to the next of kin, with the exception of father and son. In case of death of a married woman without an issue, her relatives could not demand dowry from her husband. It is believed that he abolished the system of divorce. A master could not kill his servant. He gave up the practice of prostration before the sovereign, who was to be saluted by carrying the hand to the forehead without bending. The Sayyids and priests were granted the privilege of sitting in the presence of the king, and also of dining with him on Thursdays. His troops were paid in his presence. He did not impose heavy taxes on his people, and "the revenues of Afghanistan, properly so termed, never found their way into his private coffers."

The chiefs were kept contented by giving them a share in the administration of the kingdom. He extended their powers, though they were made dependent on him. He formed a council composed of the leading chiefs of various tribes. They were consulted on almost all the important state affairs, and their advice was often adopted. "His government in short resembled much more a federated republic of which he was the head, than an absolute monarchy. After a victory he always gave up a large part of the spoils of the enemy to his soldiers. He never adopted an arrogant tone of superiority with his chiefs, and never hurt the feelings of those with whom he had once been on equal terms, and who had elevated him to the sovereign power."

The other parts of his kingdom were not treated so liberally. The

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territories in Turkistan were ruled over by force; but the Tartar chiefs were retained in their positions, and treated with moderation. In Khorasan some chiefs were attached by favour, others by taking hostages from them, and the rest by coercion.

Unfortunately, "the Indian provinces were kept by force alone." The massacres of Delhi, Ballabgarh, Mathura, Brindaban, Agra, Panipat and Kup and the destruction and pollution of the Sikh temples and tank at Amritsar will remain for ever the "terrible blemishes on his reputation," and "an indelible stain on the glory" of this great leader. To him India was the land of gold, and his supreme passion for money was the leading feature in his dealings with her. He indulged in massacres not because he possessed a bloodthirsty temperament; and under the influence of his pacific chief minister, Shah Vali Khan, he must have desisted from these outrages, had it not been for the fact that he wanted to give a thrill of life and enjoyment to his Afghan followers, and to satisfy his allies, the Indian Muslims particularly the Rohillas, who delighted in innocent bloodshed of poor Hindus and Sikhs.

Ahmad Shah Durrani kept the martial and militant Muslim tribes of the Panjab and North-West frontier in check by marrying the daughters of the leading chiefs and by avoiding any interference in their internal affairs. Their country was situated far off from the main road. Their mountainous lands were difficult of access to horsemen, as the entire Durrani army consisted of cavalry. The warlike Muslim tribes were needed for recruitment in the Afghan army. There was no money with them.

Cunningham calls him "an ideal Afghan genius, fitted for conquest but incapable of empire." He did create an empire, but he failed in consolidating it. Its causes are not far to seek. The urgent necessity for money compelled him to undertake long and tedious Indian campaigns which absorbed most of his attention and time. At home he had no peace. "Herat, Nishapur, the remoter parts of Khorasan, Meshad and other regions, constantly demanded his attention. In 1752, there was a rebellion of the nephew of Ahmad Shah as also of the Khiljis. In 1756, there were disturbances in the direction of Persia and Turkestan. In 1758, there was rebellion in Baluchistan. In 1763, there was an insurrection in Kandhar, another in Herat. In 1768, there was a great rebellion in Khorasan, occasioned by Nasirullah Mirza. Most of the Persian chiefs took part in it and a great battle had to be fought at Meshad." Besides,

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the ever-recurring troubles created by the Sikhs in the Panjab deprived him of whatever peace of mind he could enjoy, and the money he could obtain in India. In the face of such stupendous obstacles and difficulties, he naturally fell short of his own expectations for consolidating his gigantic kingdom consisting of a jumble of tribes and discordant elements. Nobody can deny the fact that he was not only a bold and brilliant soldier but also a far-sighted and forceful statesman.

In personal character he was simple, modest, affable, generous and cheerful. The author of *Tarikh-e-Sultani* asserts : Ahmad Shah had no second or equal to him in character. In spite of his perfect dignity he assumed the manners of a faqir. His extreme meekness was known everywhere and it gained universal approbation. He describes an incident which took place during the siege of Nishapur. The troops were kept without pay. They plundered the Shah's treasury. The keeper of it complained of the robbery, and receiving no answer, began to use disrespectful language towards Ahmad Shah, who then said: "Ignorant fool, I am also one of them and have attained this dignity by their consent, and with the help of their swords. I have called them partners in my monarchy, so that whenever they require some of my property, which is their own, and I refuse to grant it, I shall incur the blame of the Creator as well as of men."

On state occasions, he maintained his dignity by displaying considerable courtly pomp and show. He was easy of access, and administered justice on principles of equity and law of the land. "A very Afghan to the Afghans. . . . he was yet almost the antithesis of the national character of his people. They are cold and cruel, he was courtly in spite of his soldier's plainness, and clement; they are impetuous and reckless, he was far-seeing and singularly patient in carrying out his plans; they are rude, uncultivated and careless of learning, he was polished, a poet, a divine, and a man who took a profound delight in the society of the learned; they are intriguing, impatient of control, and bear their engagements lightly, he was the best politician of his time, a man with an instinct for order and discipline, and loyal in word and deed. Add to this that he was above the influence of the harem, a foe to drunkenness, and renowned for his generosity and charity, and the portrait is as unlike what is understood to be the Afghan national character as it can well be. And still Ahmad Shah is, in all the countries he left to his successor,

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remembered as a great, a wise and a good prince, and in his own land and amongst his own people, he is regarded as the most glorious type of the nation, and as the most finished model for its rulers."

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CHAPTER 18

Ahmad Shah Durrani's Administration of the Panjab

Weak hold over the Panjab

The Durrani rulers cannot be said to have ever held the sovereignty of the whole Panjab. They ruled through their lieutenants over Peshawar, Kashmir, Multan, Lahore and Sarhind ; but the Panjab proper was never for any continued period under their control. It was only by repeated incursions and by the terror of their personal prowess that they continued to keep a foothold in the south-east of the Indus.

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Ahmad Shah Durrani displayed brilliant feats of military skill ; but he failed in consolidating his position in the land of five rivers. The total gain of his grand successes therefore was not much. He retired from the field leaving the Sikhs undisputed masters of the Panjab. His son and successor Timur Shah remained content with having recovered Multan. His grandson Shah Zaman came here with the determination to repeat the exploits of his grandfather and twice did he seize Lahore. He soon realized what a difficult task it was to retain possession of the capital. So he quitted this country never to be disturbed again. Thus this struggle ended by the close of the century, and foreign invasions from the north-west became a thing of the past.

The Form of Government

The Afghan Government in the Panjab, as elsewhere, was in the form of monarchical, dictatorial, military, Islamic and absolute. No idea of any system of rule, different from the will of the sovereign, was applied to this country. The Durrani emperors delegated their power and authority over as many provinces into which they deemed convenient to divide the empire. To the charge of each province a

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viceroy was appointed, and he enjoyed the full authority and jurisdiction from his master. Whatever powers the sovereign exercised over the whole kingdom, the viceroy exercised in his own province. If the province committed to his care was too extensive for his personal control, it was further split up into divisions, over each of which a governor was appointed. The governor too was also entrusted with the same absolute powers as were enjoyed by his master. The Governor often divided his authority among his deputies in charge of districts. Every one of these chiefs, whether the sphere of his command was narrow or wide, was absolute master within it, subject only to the will of his head. He possessed full powers of the sovereign to make or unmake any law, to levy taxes, to raise and command troops and to dispose of the lives and property of the subjects in any manner he pleased. The only check on his power was the fear of revolt, for the suppression of which he had a barbarous army under him.

The expenses of each district were defrayed out of the taxes raised therein, and a certain sum fixed as his annual tribute was transmitted to the superior lord, to whom he was immediately responsible. From him it was conveyed to the viceroy who in turn sent it to the imperial treasury.

Kashmir, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Sarhind and Sind were the Durrani provinces in India each with a viceroy independent of one another, owing direct allegiance to the king. The viceroy was not interfered with as long as he remitted to the royal treasury regularly and punctually the sum of the annual tribute and assisted the king with troops whenever called upon to do so.

Revenue Administration

The Durranis were always on the look-out for opportunities to extort as much money from the people as they could. A sum of money arbitrarily fixed at the time of each harvest was assigned to each village by the Afghan Nazim of the district, and the headman had to find money by any means in his power. The cultivator in return enjoyed no peace. The province remained a prey with little respite to the advancing and retiring of the Durrani, Sikh and Maratha armies. Ali-ud-din writes : "Ahmad Shah's armies arrived here starving, and consumed the entire crops, raw as well as ripe. Tribute was demanded in addition. Under these circumstances the whole country was ruined."

The people were impoverished by a system of continuous freebooting which the Afghans regarded as the most important means

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of subsistence. Speaking about Nur-ud-din Bamizai, an Afghan general, the compiler of a district gazetteer writes : "The proceedings of this man may be taken as a type of the excesses committed by the invading armies, and some idea will be formed of the amount of misery caused by these inroads. Nur-ud-din, finding that the inhabitants would not pay the large ransom demanded of them, successively plundered and laid waste with fire and sword three of the largest towns of the district. Two of these, Bhera and Miani, rose again on their ruins, without however completely recovering the shock they had sustained ; but of the third, Chak Sanu, the foundations alone are to be seen."

The poor inhabitants tried to get out of the easy reach of the Afghan armies to save their life, honour and property. "Deserted sites all along the main road still tell how even the strongest villagers had to abandon the spot where their fathers had lived for centuries and make to themselves new homes on sites less pleasant to the eyes of marauding bands."

The sad plight of the cultivator may be summed up thus :— "Revenue administration there was none ; the cultivator followed the plough with a sword in his hand ; the collector came at the head of a regiment ; and if he fared well another soon followed him to pick up the crumbs."

Judicial Administration

The leader in war and the ruler in peace was also the dispenser of justice, and the civil, military and judicial functions were united in the same person. Various circumstances tended to produce this arrangement. Firstly, there were hardly any laws and thus the legislator who made a law for every occasion was entitled to judge. Secondly, it was feared that the unruly subjects would hardly respect soft authority. Thirdly, the heads of government were so busy in their affairs and pleasure-seeking pursuits that they had no time to spare for an accurate investigation, and hence they exercised arbitrary will and power. Fourthly, the people were so much accustomed to settle their own disputes by their own force or fraud or through the village or caste panchayats that the number of applications asking for justice from government judges was very small.

In the eyes of the Afghans the subject people had no right to make appeals against the decisions of the viceroy or the governor and their orders were final except when the sovereign himself was present in

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this country. When a person happened to have access and appeal to the Emperor, justice was done in non-political matters. A writer makes the following observation about Ahmad Shah Abdali : "He himself was chief justice as well as commander-in-chief, and no man disputed his decisions which were arrived at with patient care, and delivered with dignity and impartiality."

For the murder of an Afghan the people of the locality including the influential landlords were severely punished. Tahmas Khan Miskin, an eye-witness, narrates an incident : "In those days two Afghan horsemen were coming from Sarhind. By chance they lost their lives near the boundary of the fort of the Boda Ram Das. As soon as Wazir Jahan Khan heard this news, he set a few bailiffs on the headman of the place in accordance with the practice as it prevailed in Afghanistan. This headman was a well-known chief and a famous leader of the Sikhs (Sodhi Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur), and commanded revenues of lakhs of rupees. The said bailiffs punished and persecuted him so severely in the Afghan manner that he was nearly brought to death's door."

On another occasion the Mughlani Begam, herself an ex-governor of Lahore, widow of the Viceroy of the Panjab, daughter-in-law of a grand Wazir of Delhi and grand daughter-in-law of another Prime Minister of the Mughal Empire, was severely caned by Jahan Khan with his own hands for her having advised Adina Beg's agent in Lahore to go to Jalandhar and bring the sum of tribute quietly. She was not set free from confinement, where unspeakable oppression was done to her, until she had paid the amount due from the governor of the Jalandhar Doab.

The Durrani rulers were evidently not so much concerned with the settling of disputes as with the awarding of punishments. In this task they were assisted by *qazis*, *muftis* and *maulvis*. This made the clergy very influential and powerful, and not infrequently they interfered with the ordinary routine of the lives of the people.

Sometimes in fits of fury ferocious punishments were inflicted upon the offenders of the royal will. By way of illustration a government report relating to Shah Zaman is quoted here : "The Shah being much offended with Kifayat Khan Munshi ordered him to be turned over to the man-eaters, of which there are three or four in the Shah's service, who ate some of the flesh off his shoulders and one of his toes. But being afterwards informed that he was a Sayyid he spared his life and confined him. He has consented to pay four lakhs."

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Recruitment to the army

Afghanistan was a very poor country. Only 1½ per cent of the total area of the country was cultivated. Agriculture was the chief means of livelihood. The country did not afford sufficient means of subsistence. Foreign adventures either for plunder or for service were a necessity for young men. In Afghanistan every man carried his life in his hands and could gladly take away human life even for a rupee. So everyone of them was a soldier. They were all fine horsemen. Fighting and killing was a sport and pleasure. According to Walter Hamilton love for money was unbounded. Ferrier states : "Gold in Afghanistan is, more than anywhere else, the god of the human race." Hence there was no dearth for recruits. In Afghanistan every man attached himself to a chief as soon as he was able to hold a musket. When an expedition was announced, the chiefs with their contingents whose number varied in proportion to the nature and importance of the expedition, offered their services to the sovereign. In addition to these contingents, there was another class of fighters. These men were those residents of country who were not attached to any chief. They joined the troops on their own responsibility and also at their own expense, and this chiefly for the sake of plunder. They organised themselves into small or large units, as circumstances demanded, under leaders of their own choice. All these units taken together constituted the Afghan army. Further recruiting was done in India also. Where generally foreigners from Central Asia wandering in this country in search of employment were enlisted for the occasion. In an emergency every able-bodied man possessing a horse of his own was forcibly enlisted. From Kabul to Attock every soldier was paid three rupees only. Afterwards he was to live by plunder.

The army on march

Every Afghan soldier carried his food in a leather bag slung behind the saddle. At home a lover of fine fare he was extremely temperate and frugal on his journey, and could live on whatever came handy. Though a disorderly and undisciplined mob, the army moved with great rapidity over long distances. The people of the villages on their way deserted their homes for fear of the Afghan atrocities.

While on march the army was divided into three parts, advance-guard, main body and the rear-guard. At the time of battle they were converted into the right, the centre and the left respectively. A part of the advance-guard scouted for intelligence of the enemy's where-

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abouts, seized stores of food and fodder, mercilessly cut off all men of the enemy to suppress the news of their approach, and tried to take the enemy unawares. On their way they "abandoned themselves to all kinds of excesses, devastate the country, and leave behind the most fearful traces of their passage."

The encampment

On reaching the neighbourhood of the battlefield they neither paid much heed to the features of the ground, nor worried about protecting their flanks. They pitched their camps in a haphazard way, generally by the side of a village or a stream or river in order to ensure themselves of a regular supply of water. The tent of the chief was pitched in the centre, and around it the contingents formed an irregular circle. The Shah's tent had the appearance of a two-storied mosque. In front of it was fixed a cloth wall and in the back the ladies' tent. On the four corners of the royal camp four towers were temporarily erected. In the camp there were about fifty bankers and cloth merchants and nearly the same number of grocers, and about two hundred bakers, butchers, fruit-sellers, carpenters and saddlers. The whole establishment had sufficient supplies of flour, butter and rice, etc.

A note in the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin* describes a royal camp thus : "The imperial enclosure of tents was about two kilometres in circuit. It contained 120 tents, some of them large enough for several hundreds of men, and the largest could admit two or three thousands. All this was surrounded by a *kanat*, a wall of cloth, six feet high. Outside this there was a paling that surrounded the *kanats*. Between these two enclosures lived the guards."

On the battlefield

Before and during the period of the fight they made every possible effort to weaken the enemy "by ruining the country in his front, so that he cannot maintain himself ; they burn the villages, expel the inhabitants, destroy the aqueducts."

At the time of actual fighting they rushed on the enemy without the least apprehension. They seldom tried to maintain their communications. They directed all their energies to the spot on which their existence depended, and this place became the centre of their operations. They never bothered about the advantages of position, and attacked the enemy in line parallel to its ranks on all points. With

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the exception of a special contingent kept as reserve, the whole army joined in the fighting. When the enemy showed signs of exhaustion, the reserve was immediately called on the scene, and the final assault was delivered with such fire and fury that more often than not they were victorious. The Indians kept no reserves, and engaged the whole army. While fighting they uttered dreadful and loud cries. The most daring of them placed themselves in the front lines. When the front ranks were exhausted, the soldiers in the rear advanced slowly and gradually to take their places, and the front men receded to the rear.

The Afghans were excellent skirmishers and daring foragers. Each contingent was perfectly independent in its manoeuvres having no restraint of any discipline or subordination. They possessed a natural instinct to adopt a proper movement both in the case of victory or defeat which as a rule ensured success.

After victory

Their victories were most horrible and disastrous for the vanquished. "But if they gain the day," says Ferrier,[1] "woe indeed to the conquered; for an Afghan ceases not from slaughter till his arm is wearied with striking; till then there is no quarter from him, and a hundred times better is it to die on the field than survive to be his slave, certain of the hardest possible toil and the most inhuman treatment."

Mustafa, the translator of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, who lived in India during the latter half of the eighteenth century, describes the Afghan method of carrying away a male slave : "Their method of carrying away a male prisoner is this, although not even themselves would use it to carry an ox or an ass. They bore a hole in his shoulder, under the clavicula bone so remarkable in it, and passing a thong or rope through it, make the end of it fast to their saddle, and then mount and trot away. If the prisoner cannot follow at the rate of 30 or 40, 50 or 60 miles a day, he is instantly killed. Anty-physicians of the first rate, no boy, no young man of even twenty, can escape them; and when disputes arise about prize, the whole is pacified by cutting down the prize. The women abused by them in an abominable manner, fled from them, and always preferred a well to an Afghan. Girls of twelve and fourteen have become unmarriageable in their diabolical hands. And we have seen a lady, who rather than submit to such an embrace, fought the Afghan resolutely, although unarmed. He lifted his sabre, and was going to cut her down, when she pre-

[1]P. 314.

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sented her arm loaded with one of those enormous bracelets, invented by necessity, of two pounds weight of gold, and received the stroke upon the gold, while she struck the man with the other bracelet, and made him bleed; another stroke, another parade and another heavy blow; a third and the poor woman fatigued, wounded and spent, was going to fall. Nothing but a miracle could save her, and a miracle was, in fact, wrought instantly. At the moment of the third stroke, a Persian, one of the Qazilbash guards, hastening his pace, cried out : 'In the name of God, Most Merciful and with one blow made the Afghan's head fly off from his shoulders. The poor woman, who had never been out of her house, and had never set a foot upon a street, marched on without knowing whither she went, and in the evening, she was lucky enough to find her husband and family, at full twelve kosses from that fatal street. We have spoken to the lady; she is at Lucknow, a Khatrani by clan. Ex uno disce omnes."[1]

War and weapons

The dominating factor in the character of an Afghan was his love of war. In the eighteenth century as probably even now war was to him neither an art nor a science. He considered it a trade. The success of the Afghans was chiefly due to their unhesitating dash and courage, and not so much to their knowledge of military operations, strategy or tactics. Ahmad Shah in his long career never lost sight of these factors, and added to them his own genius for warfare. His successors, however, relapsed into the old practice.

Their favourite arms were long firelock and sword. They were considered as perfect marksmen in musketry, and in hand-to-hand fight they plied the sword most dexterously. As a matter of fact an Afghan regarded it the highest tribute to be called a swordsman. Among other arms used by them may be counted the swivel-gun,

[1]A translation of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin by* Sayyid Ghulam Husain Khan, III, Calcutta, 349-50.

In continuation of this incident Mustafa states :

"An Afghan's method of cleansing himself is a very plain one, as the common soldiers wear nothing but felts, and go on with them for five years together. He lights up a fire, straddles over it, and keeps his body and abominable clothes in a semi-circular motion from right to left and from left to right. Nor are their officers much cleaner. Their beards and eyebrows swarm with vermin, as well as their soldiers "

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the carbine, a lance and sometimes a bow. The firearms were rough and heavy. They also carried a shield, a foot and a half in diameter and covered either with the hide of an elephant or horse or with copper.

The condition of the subject people

The Durrani rulers were not good organisers, and therefore failed as builders of civil institutions. They carved out a military state in this country by the sword, tried to maintain it by the sword and it ultimately perished by the superior sword. They did not rule the Panjab as the guardians of the people for their general good. The main object of the government was to collect revenue, and for this purpose they tried to keep peace and order at the point of the bayonet. To secure the goodwill and co-operation of the subjects was never their aim. The people on the other hand, were coerced into submission by sheer weight of force. The subordinate officers never aimed at ameliorating the condition of those entrusted to their care. They directed their attention mostly to enrich themselves at their cost. "This system of spoliation and embezzlement," says Ferrier, "is practised by functionaries of every class, and has a sad effect upon the minds of the masses, who follow the example of their superiors: seeing that the great, instead of occupying themselves with their welfare, only think of enjoying themselves at their expense, they become egotistical and avaricious in their turn, and prefer idleness to an industry, which serves only to benefit their oppressors, and draws upon themselves additional persecution. To seize without ceremony upon the property of other people is an example which the Afghans receive daily from their chiefs, and it appears to them a practice both convenient and just; the effect of this is a permanent state of disquietude and trouble."

Effect on the Indian dress, dancing and drama

The Durrani rule and the Afghan contact with Indians had a distinct effect on the Indian dress and drama. This could not escape the notice of Mustafa, the translator of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*: "The dress at court even in winter, is the white and it is also the general colour used by all the inhabitants of India, high and low. Since the Abdalis have come to cut so great a figure in Hindustan, their dress which is the Persian, is become of fashion, especially in winter, and of course coloured and rich stuffs are admired especially at the Court

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of Lucknow. However, it must be remembered that fine cotton stuffs, embroidered or not, are more costly in India than either silks or brocades."

As regards the change that took place in Indian dancing and drama, Mustafa's observation would not be out of interest : "The Indians have no other comedies than such farces as were known in Europe three hundred years ago, but with this difference, that they never mix anything religious in their performances, and that these exhibitions, on the other hand, were always decent, and often chaste. But since the Abdali or Persian dress and even the Peshtoo language and modes and customs, have come to give the tone to the Courts of Delhi and Lucknow, many shocking indecencies, mostly of the dissenting kind, are admitted and much laughed at, in those comedies : moreover, the very dances, which were both graceful and modest in India have been tainted with that style. So that even women now dance the Caharvara for Chairmen's dance, a dance which would be akin to the Spanish fandango danced by sailors, were it danced by men mixed with women ; for it is these only that dance it, dressed in Chairmen's garbs."

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Comment

The constitution of the Afghan government and army was calculated more to destroy than to create an empire, and the spirit which directed their internal administration prevented all chances of improvement of the country over which they claimed sovereign rights. There can be no doubt that the final destruction of the Durrani political power and the substitution of orderly government by the Sikhs were necessary, and productive of great benefit to the province. The following extract from a district gazetteer is equally applicable to the whole country under Durrani occupation :

"The Sikhs were not pattern rulers, but they introduced a rude and imperfect order. Previous to their advent, if we may trust uncontradicted tradition, the whole district was the scene of one perpetual but petty warfare. Tribe fought with tribe, chief with chief, and village with village. Society lived in a sort of trustless truce broken from time to time by treacherous murders and thievish forays. In some villages the high places are still shown, where watchers were always stationed to beat the alarm drum on the approach of an enemy. The Sikhs did not, and probably could not, put a complete end to these disorders : but they cut short their boundaries and lessened their

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violence. They were themselves careless of everything that touched not their authority or their revenue, but they kept society together and prevented anarchy."

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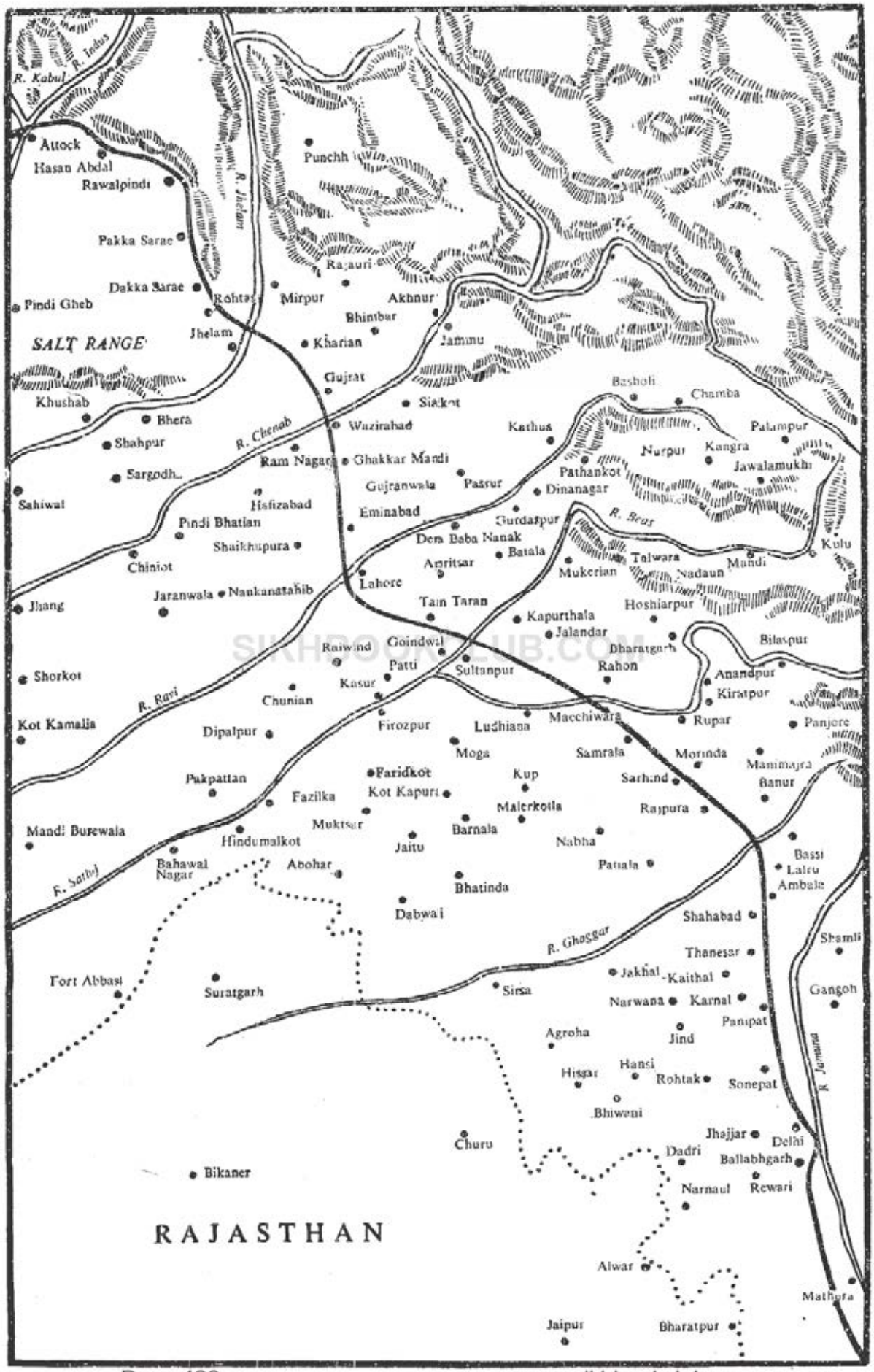
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THE DURRANI ROAD IN THE PANJAB



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CHAPTER 19

Ahmad Shah's Road From Delhi to Kabul

Introduction

This chapter is based on several contemporary sources. Rae Chatarman's *Chahar Gulshan*, written in 1759, arranged and edited by the author's grandson in 1789, gives a good account of the various stages of the road between Delhi and Kabul. The Rae was in the service of Ghazi-ud-din Imad-ul-Mulk, the grand wazir of Delhi. Muhammad Jafar Shamlu, the author of *Tarikh-e-Manazil-ul-Fatuh*, accompanied Ahmad Shah Durrani during his fifth invasion and was present at the battle of Panipat in 1761. He wrote a valuable description of all these stages. Ghulam Sarwar travelled from Lucknow to Kabul and back again in 1793-95 and submitted a paper containing a report on these stages to the British Resident at Lucknow. In 1796 Sayyid Imam-ud-din Husaini of Lucknow joined Shah Zaman at Lahore, and followed him in his train to Afghanistan, returning in 1798. His work *Tarikh-e-Husain Shahi* contains interesting details of the invader's road. In 1797, J. Lumsden, the British Resident at Lucknow, despatched Shaikh Rahim Ali to Kabul, and the best part of his narrative is on the above subject.[1]

In the Panjab, particularly between Delhi and Lahore pillars were fixed at regular intervals, the distance between the two being named a *kos*. The pillars could be seen from a distance, and there was almost no risk for the traveller to lose his way even at night. In addition to the *kos*-pillars, the traveller had the advantage of trees, planted along the road on both sides and *saraes* or rest-houses at

[1]The total distance covered by Ahmad Shah Durrani was approximately 1800 kilometres from Kandhar to Delhi: Kandhar to Ghazni 380 kms, Ghazni to Kabul 125, Kabul to Peshawar 315, Peshawar to Lahore 475, and Lahore to Delhi 525 kms. It might have taken him nearly one year in returning to his capitals.

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certain distances for his accommodation. As a rule, each *sarae* was provided with a tank for the supply of water to men and beasts. The remains of some of these saraes and pillars can still be traced.

As a matter of fact, this was the great imperial route leading from Delhi to Kabul. It was frequented by imperial officials and Mughal armies. The great Mughal Emperors followed this road and halted at these places. It is now called Grand Trunk Road. The old route has been changed particularly in the Jalandhar Doab in order to connect it with Jalandhar and Amritsar, and in several other places. From Delhi to Kabul the Road was divided into 75 stages.

Main stages and their brief description

1. *Badli Sarae*, 14 kms from Delhi. The people of this place were generally employed in trade and commerce. They settled there from Central Panjab, especially from Lahore. The inhabitants of the district were zamindars, chiefly Jats and Gujars. Along the road from Delhi to this place there were ruins of the Shalamar Garden, palaces, mosques, tombs and water courses. The Jamuna flowed at a distance of 3½ kms to the east. The dry bed of Ali Mardan Khan's canal dug in the reign of Shah Jahan, and taken off from the Sirmur hills near Mukhlispur could be traced southward of the Grand Trunk Road. Firoz Shah's canal also lay in ruins. The soil was fertile capable of growing all kinds of crops. An army with heavy artillery could easily pass on the road. All facilities were provided to the traveller.

2. *Narela*, 12 kms from Badli. The road was lined with lofty and shady trees. The cultivators were mostly Jats. Soil was fertile. In some places vast tracts of tall grass could be seen, while in others trees abounded. Numerous wells of sweet water existed everywhere. Heavy artillery could pass without any difficulty.

3. *Sonepat*, 18 kms. The town was inhabited by Hindus and Muslims. Raja Shiv Nath Qanungo built a wall around it. It had a good brick *sarae* for the travellers.

4. *Ganaur*, 16 kms. The cultivators were Jats, but the landlords were Muslims. The peasants were of refractory nature. Soil was productive. The road was wide and wells of fine water were available everywhere. The road was unsafe, being infested with thieves and robbers, mostly Ranghars and Gujars.

5. *Samalkha*, 12 kms. The river Jamuna flowed to the north, about 16 kms distant ; while traces of Firoz Shah's canal existed to the south nearly at the same distance. There were jungles of *plās* or *dhāk*

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trees. The road was shady, but unsafe. There were numerous wells of good drinking water.

6. *Panipat*, 17 kms. The Jamuna ran towards the north and Firoz Shah's canal to the south at short distances. The Elwa Ghat on the Jamuna was situated at a distance of five *kos*. The country was covered with a jungle of *dhāk* trees and thorny bushes, and was infested with thieves and robbers. People were of a rebellious character, and the inhabitants chiefly consisted of Jats and Muslims Rajputs. Land was fertile and the road good. The insecurity of the road between Ganaur and Panipat was described in an interesting couplet by a contemporary poet, Shah Mubarik Abru :

Panipat āj chhor jo Ganaur tūm chale,
To rāh bich Jāio Jānān sambhālke.

The very name of the place Sambhālka, (Be alert), situated between Ganaur and Panipat gave a warning to the traveller. In the couplet quoted above there is a pun on the word Sambhālke.[1]

7. *Gharaunda*, 17 kms. The people were of refractory character, and were generally given to thieving. Soil was productive and the road in good condition, but travelling was unsafe. Kunjpura, the well known seat of Afghan chiefs, was situated to the right hand side on the right bank of the Jamuna.

8. *Karnal*, 17 kms. An aqueduct crossed the road between Gharaunda and Karnal. Karnal formed the boundary line of the territory under the Maratha influence. In 1795, Fazal Ali, a Muslim Chauhan Rajput, was the zamindar of the place. The remains of Firoz Shah's canal could be seen, and about the close of the eighteenth century there still existed a very strong brick-built bridge over it. Soil was fertile, and road well provided with good drinking water, but travelling was dangerous on account of the constant fear of thieves.

9. *Taraori*, also called Azimabad, 12 kms. About 15 kms from this place there were the ruins of a *sarae* known as Hajam. Gulsher Khan, the grandson of Najabat Khan, the chief of Kunjpura, was the ruler of the place. The Jamuna flowed 20 kms northward. Land, road and people resembled those of Karnal.

10. *Thanesar*, 21 kms. It was under Bhanga Singh Dallewalia, and was "in consequence of the industry of the Sikhs very well cultivated." The river Sarasvati flowed 5 kms to the west and crossed the main road. The place was visited by Hindu pilgrims. Sikhs were found

[1] *Ab-e-Hayat* by Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad, p. 100.

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in a large number. The peasants were chiefly Muslim Rajputs.

11. *Shahabad*[1], 22 kms. The Markanda stream crossed the road below this place. It was an old town, and possessed a big brick-built *sarae*. Karam Singh Nirmala was the chief who had converted the *sarae* into a fort for his own residence. The zamindars were mostly Sikhs and Jats. Land was fertile and the road shady abounding in fountains of sweet water at convenient intervals.

12. *Ambala*, 27 kms. The river Ghaggar flowed near it. The crossing of it in the rainy season was extremely dangerous. The road also became muddy and slippery in rains and was difficult to pass by an army. The town was "possessed by the nephew of Lal Singh deceased, who retains 200 horsemen in his service."

13. *Raja Sarae*[2] (modern Rajpura), 21 kms. The town contained 2,000 houses, many of which were made of stone and brick. Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala was the ruler of the place. The zamindars were mostly Sikhs and Jats. The road was level and shady ; wells, fountains and mango orchards abounded on either side. The soil was productive.

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14. *Sarhind*, 25 kms. Raja Sahib Singh ruled over this place. The fort of Sarhind was in ruins. A stream flowed near it which was flooded in the rains. "Over that there is a brick bridge near the Shalamar gardens."

15. *Khanna Sarae*, 18 kms. There was an old *sarae* in ruins. The place also had a deserted appearance. The zamindars were mostly Jats.

16. *Sarae Lashkari Khan*, 15 kms. Tara Singh Ghaiba was the chief of the place.

17. *Ludhiana*[3], 32 kms. The town was situated on the eastern bank of the Satluj, the first of the Panjab rivers. Rae Ilyas ruled over the place. The zamindars were mostly Muslim Rajputs.

18. *Phillaur*, 14 kms. It was a small enclosed town. Originally it was a *sarae* called Sarae Filori Khan built by Zakariya Khan, the viceroy of the Panjab, (1726-1745) after the name of his son known to history as Shahnawaz Khan, viceroy of the Panjab, (1747-48).

19. *Sarae Nurmahal*, 20 kms. The place was under Tara Singh Ghaiba of Rahon.

[1]Between Thanesar and Shahabad Shamlu puts Pehowa as one of the stages.
[2]Shamlu omits this stage.
[3]Pail is the only stage mentioned by Shamlu between Sarhind and Ludhiana.

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20. *Nakodar Sarae,* 14 kms. It was ruled over by Tara Singh Ghaiba. The district of Bajwara in which this place was situated was famous for Chandeli cloth which attracted merchants from distant places such as Multan, Kashmir, Peshawar and Kabul.

21. *Dakhni Sarae,* 8 kms. It belonged to Tara Singh Ghaiba. In several parts of the road there were remains of magnificent buildings.

22. *Tuti Sarae,*[1] 21 kms. It was in ruins. The chief of the place was Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia.

23. *Sultanpur,* 21 kms. Sugar-cane was grown here in abundance. Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia was the chief of the place.

24. *Goindwal,*[2] 23 kms. The river Beas was crossed over at this place. It was under Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia.

25. *Aurangabad Sarae,* 13 kms. It belonged to Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala.

26. *Nur-ud-din ki Sarae,* 13 kms. The zamindars were chiefly Jats.

27. *Sarae Amanat Khan,* 19 kms. The zamindars were Jats, and the chief was Mohar Singh, the son of Sobha Singh of Lahore.

28. *Raja Tal,* 13 kms. It was possessed by Lahna Singh, one of the Lahore chiefs.

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29. *Khankhanan Sarae,* 20 kms. It was under Lahna Singh of Lahore.

30. *Lahore,* 12 kms. It was situated on the bank of the Ravi which flowed just below the fort. The suburbs lay deserted. The city was ruled over by three chiefs, Lahna Singh, Sahib Singh Bhangi, son of Gujar Singh, and Mohar Singh, son of Sobha Singh.

31. *Shahdara,* actually Shahdera or the royal camp, 8 kms. It was famous for Jahangir's tomb situated in a garden. The chief of this place was Lahna Singh, "who is much beloved for his justice and benevolence" by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike.

32. *Sarae Fazalabad,* 14 kms. Lahna Singh was the chief of the place.

33. *Pul Shah Daula,* 18 kms. There was a bridge on the Degh river which ran in the rains from the hills. This place belonged to Jodh Singh who kept 100 horsemen.

34. *Eminabad,* 19 kms. The chief of this place was Ranjit Singh, the son of Mahan Singh.

[1]Shamlu refers to no stage between Nurmahal and Tuti Sarae.

[2]According to Shamlu the river was crossed at Fatahabad, 5 kms to the west.

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35. *Sarae Kachchi or Gujar Sarae,*[1] (modern Gujranwala), 13 kms. There was a mud fort which was pulled down by Shah Zaman. It was the headquarters of Ranjit Singh who kept 3,000 horsemen in his service, and could collect many more in an emergency.

36. *Chimah Gakhar or Sarae Gakhar,* 16 kms.

37. *Nizamabad,* 15 kms. It belonged to Ranjit Singh.

38. *Wazirabad,* 2 kms. It was situated on the eastern bank of the Chenab. The zamindars were mostly Muslims, but the chief was Sahib Singh Bhangi, son of Gujar Singh who maintained a contingent of 1,000 horse.

39. *Gujrat Shah Daula,* 13 kms. It was under Sahib Singh Bhangi.

40. *Khwaspurah,* popularly known as *Khwas Khan's Sarae,* 18 kms. After this Bhimbar river was crossed. It was also under Sahib Singh Bhangi. The road was badly cut by various ravines. The inhabitants were Jats and Muslims.

41. *Kharian*[2], 23 kms. From this place rocky land began, and it continued increasing. The soil was not so productive as in the last stages. The road was difficult to pass. The people were mostly Muslim Jats.

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42. *Aurangabad,*[3] 14 kms. There was a brick-built sarae and many tanks. Road was bad and unfit for the passage of artillery.

43. *Jehlam,* 3 kms. It was situated on the right bank of the river Jehlam. Upward it was known by the name of Behat and downward from this place by that of Jehlam. The country was rocky and road bad. It was under Ranjit Singh.

44. *Rohtas,* 20 kms. It was a strong fort built on a hill. It was in the possession of Nur Khan who owed allegiance to Ranjit Singh, but on Shah Zaman's arrival had also submitted to him, maintaining at the same time friendly relations with the Sikhs.

45. *Kasran Sarae,* 18 kms. The chief of the place was Sahib Singh Bhangi, but it was held on his behalf by Nur Khan of Rohtas. Scarcity of grain prevailed here as the soil was not fit for cultivation. Roads were bad.

46. *Sarae Jalal,* 15 kms. There was the tomb of Pir Jalal. Nur Khan was the zamindar, and Sahib Singh was the chief. The land was rocky

[1]Jafar Shamlu mentions two different places named Kachcha Sarae and Gujran Sarae. *Tarikh-e-Manazil-ul-Fatuh,* p. 20.

[2]Several authorities make no mention of this stage.

[3]This stage is omitted by Shamlu.

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and covered with jungle. Road was difficult to pass.

47. *Dakka Sarae*, 18 kms. It was situated on a hill. A nullah crossed the road at this place. The zamindars were of Gakhar tribe.

48. *Sarae Kale Khan*, 18 kms. The chief of the place was Sahib Singh who kept here a contingent of 500 horse to maintain his authority.

49. *Pakka Sarae*[1], 24 kms. It was owned by an Afghan tribe who owed no allegiance to the Sikhs. They spoke a mixture of Panjabi and Pashto languages. The soil was good in quality, but the road was bad.

50. *Rawalpindi*, 12 kms. This place was under Milkha Singh Thepuria. The Khattak Afghans were supreme in the district. Whenever they were attacked by the Sikhs, they submitted to them and paid tribute ; but afterwards assumed an independent attitude.

51. *Kharpura Sarae*, 17 kms. A stream ran by it. There was a bridge of bricks over the stream. The zamindars were Afghans. Though they were attacked by the Sikhs and deprived of their cattle, but they did not submit to them. At a distance of 15 kms the road was crossed by a stream called Kala Pani.[2]

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52. *Hasan Abdal*, 29 kms. The zamindars were Afghans who paid tribute to the Kabul Government. The *sarae* was in ruins. It had a number of cypress and date-trees. There was a tepid spring. Jahangir's palace and gardens were situated 2 kms away at Wāh.

53. *Sarae Miran*,[3] 14 kms. The Sarae was in ruins. There were several stone buildings. The zamindars were Muslims. Land was level and well cultivated and the road good.

54. *Sarae Dangran*, 11 kms. This was a deserted place, though it was well cultivated and had wells and fountains.

55. *Shamsabad*, 14 kms. It was situated on an eminence. The place was well inhabited. Zamindars were Khattak Afghans.

56. *Attock*, 16 kms. It stood on a hill on the bank of the Indus. The country to the left was swampy. The place contained about 2,000 houses, but the neighbourhood was thinly inhabited. The fort was in

[1]Between Pakka Sarae and Rawalpindi Shamlu puts Sarae Lashkari, while he mentions no stage between Rohtas and Pakka Sarae.

[2]Shamlu mentions Kala Pani and Kotal Margala as two stages between Kharpura and Hasan Abdal. He is supported by Baron Charles Hugel who says there were three saraes between Hasan Abdal and Rawalpindi. One of them is named Mulgala by him.

[3]This stage is not mentioned by Shamlu.

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possession of the Khattak Afghans. There was not a single tree in the plain about it. It was as level as a sheet of water. The plain was often inundated by the Indus, and there were some streams. The banks of the Indus were about eighty feet high above the level of water in winter. The river bed had water over one-eighth portion of it in cold weather.

57. *Khairabad*,[1] 5 kms. It was situated on the western bank of the Indus opposite Attock. There were 200 houses, and a small bazar. The Khattak Afghans were the lords of the land.

58. *Akorah Khattak*,[2] 13 kms. A nullah crossed the road near it. The place was owned by Khattak Afghans.

59. *Shahabad*,[3] 30 kms. There was a brick-built sarae. Road was good and shady, and the land level and well watered.

60. *Peshawar*, 24 kms. There was the famous fort of Bala Hisar, and many stone buildings. The soil was fertile and well watered. It was noted for fruits, sugar-cane and rice. The best quality of rice grown in Bara was sold from 8 to 12 rupees per maund. Scent of roses was prepared on a big scale and was priced from 5 to 40 rupees per *tola*. The inhabitants were chiefly Afghans. Zirdo Khan was the chief appointed by Shah Zaman. He maintained a force of 5,000 horse. "But the people of this city are rebellious, quarrelsome and given to the use of abusive language."[4]

61. *Jamrud*, 21 kms. It was situated at the mouth of the Khaibar Pass on a range of hills. It had a strong fort. The country was owned by the Afridi Afghans of Khalil tribe.

62. *Ali Masjid*, 16 kms. The land was covered with low hills. Water was dirty and grain scarce. Afridi Afghans were powerful there.

63. *Qila Lal Beg*, 20 kms. It contained 300 houses and a bazar. The Afridis served as guards on the road ; but sometimes they plundered the merchants and rich travellers themselves.[5]

64. *Dakka*, 20 kms. The Afghans of Mahmand and Shinwari tribes were in power. The river Kabul was crossed nearly 7 kms away from

[1]This stage is omitted by Shamlu.

[2]Rahim Ali calls it Caramaskin Sarae.

[3]Some mention Noshahra first and then Shahabad. Shamlu gives Chamakni as a stage between Noshahra and Peshawar.

[4]*Husain Shahi*, 245. Imam-ud-din noted that in this city there were about 3,000 Kashmiris and a large number of Kalals.

[5]This stage is not mentioned by Shamlu.

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this place. Road was almost level, and on either side there were bare rocky hills.

65. *Isuali*, 22 kms. The land was hilly, but well cultivated. Mahmand Afghans were powerful.[1] The road ran nearly parallel to the Kabul river between two ranges of mountains. The country was stony and barren.

66. *Jalalabad*,[2] 48 kms. The road was fairly good and land well cultivated. The cultivated portions were generally intersected by water courses. Zamindars and husbandmen were mostly Afghans of Tajik tribe.

67. *Charbagh*, 16 kms. Tajik Afghans were supreme. It was well inhabited and cultivated. The road was covered with very lofty trees, and was for the most part level. There was a garden named Balabagh built by Ali Mardan Khan.

68. *Fatahabad*, 13 kms. Snakes abounded here.

69. *Nimlah Bagh*, 16 kms. The road was level and shady. There was a royal garden built by Ali Mardan Khan and planted with cypress, poplar and fruit trees.

70. *Gandamak*, 13 kms. The land was badly cultivated and the road difficult to pass. There was an abrupt rise in the land. Water and provisions were abundant. Khagwati Afghans were supreme here.

71. *Surkhab or Surkhrod*, 13 kms. The place was thinly inhabited. Goats were abundant, and people lived on flesh and milk of goats, and wore clothes made of their skin. Khagwati Afghans were in power.

72. *Jagdalak*, 25 kms. The place was under the Nazim of Kabul. The road was bad, and passed through a barren country, and narrow defiles.[3]

73. *Barikab*, 27 kms. It was inhabited chiefly by Tajik Afghans. The road passed through low hills, and up and down steep ascents. Water and provisions could be had at several places.

74. *Butkhak*, 25 kms. The road passed through the pass of Khurd Kabul, narrow defiles and lofty hills.

[1]Between Isuali and Jalalabad Shamlu puts Ali Boghan as one of the stages.

[2]Between Dakka and Jalalabad Ghulam Sarwar gives two stages. Deh-e-Ghulaman and Sarae Wiran ; while *Husain Shahi* puts three, Hazar Nao, Bhatti Kot, and Ali Boghan. But Rahim Ali gives a reason for this stage being so long saying that "there is no halting place of safety in the way, as Afghans plunder all caravans that are not well escorted."

[3]Shamlu does not mention this stage.

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75. *Kabul*[1], 20 kms. Nearly in the middle of the two places the Logar river was crossed. The cultivators on the way were chiefly Tajik Afghans. The city was situated at a height of 6,500 feet. The river Kabul passes through the city.

Ghazni is 125 kms from Kabul, and is situated at a height of 7,726 feet above sea level.

Kandhar is 380 kms from Ghazni and stands at 3,400 feet above sea level. Two perennial canals passed through this city.

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[1]Between Barikab and Kabul Shamlu gives four stages: Chaman Khubi Khurd Kabul, Tezin, and Kitah Sang. *Tarikh-e-Manazil-ul-Fatuh*, 10-11.

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CHAPTER 20

Timur Shah Durrani's Five Campaigns, 1772-1793

Early career

In 1772 Ahmad Shah was succeeded by his son Timur Shah. He was born in December, 1746, at Meshad in Iran where his father was in the service of Nadir Shah. Timur was educated at home, and received practical training in the art of warfare by accompanying his father on many of his expeditions. He was present in Delhi in January, 1757, when his father had invaded India for the fourth time. In February, 1757, Timur Shah was married at the age of ten to the daughter of Emperor Alamgir II. In March of the same year, while heading a detachment carrying booty from Delhi to Lahore, he was robbed by the Sikhs. A Marathi letter of this time states :

"At the end of March, 1757, when the front division of Abdali's army under Prince Timur was transporting the plundered wealth of Delhi to Lahore, Alha Singh (the founder of Patiala state), in concert with other Sikh robbers, barred his path at Sanaur (6 kms south-east of Patiala) and robbed him of half his treasures, and again attacked and plundered him at Malerkot (60 kms west of Patiala). So great had been the success of these brigands that a rumour had magnified it into the Prince's captivity and even death at their hands."

In May, 1757, Timur Shah was appointed viceroy of the Panjab, Derajat and Sind by his father, with Jahan Khan, the commander-in-chief, as his guardian and deputy. At that time the Prince was only a child, and therefore, the entire administration was centred in the hands of Jahan Khan. The Afghan general did not possess the qualities of a good administrator. His relations with the Sikhs were bitter, and the latter continually harassed the former. They crossed swords a number of times, all of which are vividly described by Tahmas Khan Miskin who took an active part in all the engagements.

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Miskin has no hesitation in asserting that "from that moment the peace and orderly rule which had been recently established in the country disappeared and the Sikhs rose in rebellion on all sides."

The Sikhs then joined Adina Beg Khan, the famous governor of the Jalandhar Doab, and with the assistance of the Marathas defeated and drove out Jahan Khan and Timur Shah from the Panjab in April, 1758. Afterwards Timur Shah served as governor of Herat.

Ahmad Shah was taken ill early in 1772. He went from Kandhar to Toba Maharuf, a hill station ; but his condition grew worse. At that time Timur Shah was the governor of Herat and Khorasan as far as Nishapur. On hearing that his father was dying, he left for Kandhar to see him ; but before he reached his destination Ahmad Shah ordered him to return immediately to his seat of government, probably under the influence of his Prime Minister Shah Vali Khan, who was interested in the succession of another Prince. Early in April Ahmad Shah realized that his end was drawing very near. Consequently, he summoned a council of his chiefs, nominated Timur Shah his successor, and made all the nobles present there swear fealty to the Prince. Shortly afterwards he passed away.

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Timur Shah was at Herat when he learnt the news of his father's death and his own nomination to the throne. Timur was the second of the eight sons[1] of Ahmad Shah. His father had selected him in view of his being the worthiest of all of them. Shah Vali Khan, the prime minister, was interested in the eldest prince, Sulaiman, to whom he had married his daughter. On Ahmad Shah's death, he called a council of the Durrani chiefs to choose their king and Sulaiman was raised to the throne. But Abdullah Khan Popalzai, who held the high office of Diwan Begi, and who was at the head of another rival party, declared in favour of Timur.

Timur Shah at once hurried from Herat to Kandhar, and won over some Durrani chiefs. Shah Vali Khan's attempt to collect an army to oppose Timur Shah failed, and he immediately made offers of submission. He was not allowed to see Timur Shah as the courtiers were afraid of his magic tongue, which they expected would certainly influence the king. He was tried and condemned to death for treason together with his two sons and two cousins. Timur Shah thus became the undisputed master of his father's vast dominions. Kandhar, being

[1]The names of six of his sons are known : Sulaiman, Timur, Darab, Shahab, Sikandar and Parvez.

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the stronghold of the Durrani tribe, many of whom were the partisans of the late wazir, was not liked by Timur as the seat of his government. He transferred his capital to Kabul "inhabited by Tajiks, the most quiet and submissive of all the subjects of the Afghan monarchy." He appointed Faizullah Khan his prime minister. His most trustworthy courtier was Mullan Abdul Ghaffar, a Hindu Kalal of Lahore, who had been converted to Islam when young by Ahmad Shah Durrani.

Having ascended the throne Timur Shah struck coins in his name which bore the following inscription :

Charkh me ārad tila wa nuqra az Khurshid-o-Mah,
Ta zanad bar chehra naqsh sikkā-e-Timur Shah.

(Heaven brings gold and silver from the sun and moon, in order that the stamp of Timur Shah be fixed on the face of his coins.)

His seal had this inscription :

Alam shud az ināyāt-e-Ilāhi,
Bālem daulat-e-Timur Shahi.

(Through the grace of God, the kingdom of Timur Shah became conspicuous in the world).

Timur Shah's earliest coins struck in India bear the date 1774 and the name of Attock mint. The inscriptions on them are as follows :[1]

Obverse

Sikka-e-Timur Shah, naqsh 1188.
Wa mah to kunad bar chehra shid
Charkh me ārad tila wa nuqra az Khur.

Reverse

Mānus maimanat jalus zarab Attock san 2.

First invasion of the Panjab, 1774-75

Preoccupation at home : Timur Shah was a man of peaceful temperament, and preferred devoting his attention chiefly to consolidating his disjointed kingdom and to improve the economic condition of the country, not by plunder but by increasing production. He did not interfere much in Indian affairs. But the political atmosphere

[1]Elphinstone, *Caubul*, 558-59 ; *Indian Antiquary*, XVI, 303 ; Latif, *Panjab*, 289 fn; Malleson, 29-34 ; Miskin, 165 ; Rajwade, I, 85 ; Sarkar, *Fall*, II, 71-72 ; *Tarikh-e-Sultani*, 148-50 ; Whitehead, III, 59.

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in this country was never free from fear on account of his father's repeated exploits. We find some Indian potentates keeping themselves in touch with the political situation in Afghanistan. There was also an exchange of ambassadors, letters and presents between these two countries. On several occasions weak powers sought assistance from the Afghan monarch; while strong ones kept themselves alert to cope with the situation in case of an actual invasion from the north-west.

About two years after his accession Timur Shah sent two ambassadors, Muhammad Raza Khan and Allahdad Khan to Delhi. They reached the capital in June, 1774, and were granted robes of honour by Shah Alam II. Abdul Ahad Khan, the deputy wazir, informed the king that Timur Shah was contemplating an invasion of India; but a message that arrived at Delhi on 28 June dispelled all fears of the expected campaign. It stated that Timur Shah was at Kabul. Abdul Khaliq Khan, a Durrani chief, invited Nasir Khan Baluch to plunder Kandhar, and in consequence he created disturbances in that quarter. Khaiqubad Khan, the chief of Badakhshan, was plundering Timur Shah's country on the other side of Herat. Princes Sulaiman Shikoh and Sikandar Shah were making warlike preparations against the king. The Durrani chiefs were disaffected and were entering into an alliance with the above princes. These disorders wholly occupied Timur's attention.

Plot at Peshawar : Shortly afterwards a conspiracy was hatched to assassinate Timur Shah and to place on the throne his nephew Sikandar Khan, son of Sulaiman. Faizullah Khan Khalil, a chief of Mahmand tribe, was at the head of the plot. In this plot he was joined by Mian Muhammad, son of Shaikh Umar, a holy man of Chamakni. He invited Timur Shah to the Panjab to crush the power of the Sikhs promising to help the Shah with a large number of troops, and with his permission raised a force of 25,000 men.

Timur Shah embraced this opportunity to recover his lost territories in India, and marched to the Panjab in November, 1774. At Peshawar Faizullah Khan placed his men at the disposal of the Shah. Timur led them onward, and they crossed the Indus at Attock on 15 January, 1775. Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi and some other Sikhs boldly advanced to check his progress. In a skirmish that followed the Sikhs were defeated. They immediately fell back and halted on the banks of the Chenab.

The audacity of the Sikhs succeeded in achieving its object.

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Timur Shah realized the weakness of his army in view of its being smaller in number. He gave up the idea of proceeding farther into the heart of the Sikh country and retired to Peshawar. Timur Shah stayed there for a couple of months to avoid the rigour of winter of Kabul, and took up his abode in the Bala Hisar.[1]

It offered a good opportunity to Faizullah Khan to execute his cunning design of murdering the Shah. He won over Yaqut Khan, head of the eunuchs, the guard of the royal harem. The scheme was that when the king was at his siesta, and his personal guards were also asleep, Faizullah Khan and his men would be permitted by Yaqut Khan to enter the palace. Thus 2,500 hill riflemen and about the same number of men of Peshawar quietly surrounded the citadel, where several thousand Qizalbash horsemen, the guards of the king, were stationed. They were told that the king had sent for them inside the fort. In view of the high position of Faizullah Khan they let them in. Some of Faizullah's men entered the royal kitchen to partake of the delicious victuals. Muhammad Tayyab of Lahore, the Nazir, and Iltifat Khan eunuch who were in the kitchen were severely wounded.

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The women attendants of the harem immediately awakened Timur Shah and informed him of the serious conspiracy. On hearing the sound of footsteps he perceived the impending danger and quickly hid himself at the top of the tower of the citadel. The conspirators searched for him, but nobody suspected him in the tower. When they were retiring in disappointment, the king shouted to his guards from the place of hiding and by waving his turban in the air gave an alarm. The assassins tried to break through the door of the tower, but it being of iron resisted all their attempts. Meanwhile the guards were up. Faizullah Khan and some of his hill men made good their escape, taking shelter in the impenetrable hills of Hashtnagar, while many were cut to pieces. Timur's wrath fell upon the people of Peshawar, and in a moment of fury he ordered a massacre, in which nearly one-third of the male population about 6,000 men perished. Yaqut Khan was killed by pouring boiling oil over his head.[2]

[1]Sayyid Muhammad Latif says that Faizullah Khan was Timur Shah's general, and that he entered into a conspiracy with Mian Muhammad, son of Shaikh Umar, chief of Chamakni.

[2]Elphinstone says no distinction was made between the guilty and the innocent in the slaughter.

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Timur Shah was determined to secure the head of Faizullah Khan. Realising the futility of getting him by force he resorted to cunning. He made it a point to declare almost everyday in the public as well as in private that Faizullah Khan was not to blame, that he had been occasionally harsh to him, which led him to take that step, and that he had forgiven him. When he was sure that this news had reached him, he sent him a letter of pardon written and sealed on a leaf of the Holy Quran. It was conveyed to him by a great noble of the court. Faizullah Khan believing in the sanctity of the holy book came to Kabul to express sorrow at his misdeed. He was beheaded the same day when he entered the city.[1]

Second invasion and the conquest of Multan, 1779-80

The situation in India : The political horizon in India was again surcharged with the news of a fresh Durrani invasion. As early as October, 1775, it was known that Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II at the suggestion of Abdul Ahad Khan had invited Timur Shah to invade India, proposing to effect "a double marriage between their children." News, perhaps unreliable, was received to the effect that a part of Timur Shah's army had crossed the Indus at Attock. As Nasir Khan Baluch was rising in open rebellion, and the Sikhs were ready to oppose Timur's advance, the Shah did not undertake the expedition.

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The fear of the impending invasion was again allayed by a report reaching Delhi in February, 1776. It stated that Timur Shah's position had been considerably weakened. Timur was "represented as indolent and addicted to pleasure and liquor." The Sikhs who were in possession of the provinces of Lahore and Multan formed a "tolerable barrier" against any attempt of Timur Shah to disturb the powers of Hindustan. Sind, though a dependency of Afghanistan, reduced the amount of tribute to seven lakhs, which also was not regularly paid. Nasir Khan Baluch did not acknowledge the overlordship of the Afghan monarch. "Many of the chiefs or nobility, who hold land on the feudal tenure of furnishing troops are highly discontented and pay little respect to the authority of their sovereign." The chief of Bahawalpur, though tributary to Timur Shah, treated "his authority with little respect."

[1]*CPC*, IV, 1116, 1121; *Delhi Chronicle*, 285; Ferrier, 102-4; *Husain Shahi*, 97-101 ; *Tarikh-e-Sultani*, 152-53.

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Latif's view

Sayyid Muhammad Latif is of the view that in the winter of 1777-78 Timur Shah sent an expedition under Haini Khan to recover Multan. In the battle which seems to have been fought near Kali Sarae (about 50 kms from Attock), Haini Khan was repulsed and captured by the Sikhs. He was tied to the mouth of a cannon and was blown away.

Baharu Khan : In 1778 Timur Shah sent Baharu Khan to seize Multan. Shah Yusaf, a resident of Multan, states that Baharu Khan entered the town by breaking a hole into the wall, and sacked the city so thoroughly that "none was left anything with him." To save this booty he immediately retired to Afghanistan. At the same time Timur Shah had sent his ambassador, Abdul Jabbar Khan, to Delhi. He reached the imperial capital on March 12, 1778. Shah Alam II granted him an interview on March 26, 1778, and assured him of his full co-operation to Timur Shah. Madad Khan was sent for the same purpose, but he also retired after some time.

The vanguard : Timur Shah thereupon decided to conquer Multan himself, and sent a contingent of 15,000 horse as his advance guard. This force was opposed by the Sikhs on the banks of the Indus ; but in the conflict they were defeated. Finding the Sikhs scattered about everywhere, this contingent considered it advisable to retire to Peshawar and to wait there for the arrival of the main body.

The British Government's view : The news of Timur Shah's invasion alarmed even the British Government, but they heaved a sigh of relief on learning that his activities were to be exclusively confined to the country of the Sikhs. "But allowing this rumour to be true", says a Government report, "it is not supposed, nor is it indeed likely that his progress will extend beyond the remote bounds of the Seik territory as the season is so far advanced and the separate bodies of Seiks from the different districts are waiting to oppose him."

Negotiation with Mahadji Sindhia : In view of the serious opposition of the Sikhs, the Durrani agents at Delhi tried to secure assistance from the notable Maratha chief Mahadji Sindhia, so that the Sikhs might be attacked on two fronts. Mahadji cleverly put them off. A news dated September 12, 1779, near Karnal, stated that Timur Shah had arrived at Peshawar and his advance guard had crossed the river Jehlam. There it was discovered that a strong army of sixty thousand Sikhs (*Sikhon ki khunkhār fauj*) intended to seize Derah Ismail Khan, Derah Ghazi Khan, and Sind. At this news Timur Shah was greatly alarmed. To check this grandiose scheme of the Sikhs, Timur Shah

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made up his mind to recover Multan at any cost.

Diplomatic move : Timur Shah at first tried to recover Multan by diplomacy. He sent Haji Ali[1] Khan as his agent to the Sikhs at the head of a few horsemen to negotiate. The Shah advised him to behave most politely. (*Tum nihāyat narmi aur sanjidgi ke sāth guftgu karnā.*) The agent tried to frighten the Sikhs of the coming conflict with the "lions of Islam" and of the terrible consequences of "the royal wrath." He endeavoured to persuade them to retire from Multan voluntarily. Multan was under Bhangi sardars. They also held Rawalpindi and Hasan Abdal, and dominated the country up to Attock. The Afghan deputation seems to have met the Sikh chiefs at Kali Sarae, the frontier outpost of Bhangi chiefs. The Sikhs held a gurmata and declared that "here is an ambassador of the Shah; but our king is Sat Guru. This man threatens us with the Shah's displeasure ; we should therefore put him to death." They tied him to a tree, and shot him dead. His companions were allowed to depart in peace to report to the Shah.The Sikhs then fell back to Rohtas.

The battle of Rohtas : On learning this sad news Timur Shah detached a choice force of 18,000 men consisting of Yusafzais, Durranis, Mughals and Qizalbashes under Zangi Khan Durrani, an experienced and brave general. He was advised by the Shah to march by unfrequented routes and thus to fall upon the Sikhs unaware. He advanced by forced marches towards Rohtas. Zangi Khan issued strict orders to maintain perfect secrecy of his own movements. The contemporary author of *Husain Shahi* states that nobody talked on the way, and even if one wanted to drink water he indicated his desire by gestures alone. He halted at a distance of 25 kms from the Sikh camp and posted guards on all sides. He ordered to imprison anyone going towards the direction of the Sikh camp. After midnight Zangi Khan organized his troops. The Mughals and Qizalbashes were on his right and the Durranis on his left. He himself remained in the centre at the head of a Yusafzai contingent of 5,000. The Sikhs were absolutely ignorant of their presence, considering them to be at Peshawar, nearly 300 kms distant. Early in the morning a little before daybreak he fell upon the Sikhs. "These people, cowards as jackals and cunning like fox, on seeing brave warriors close at hand, jumped in the twinkling of an eye on their horses and got ready to fight. So tough was the resistance offered by the Sikhs that Zangi Khan was

[1]Gian Singh calls him Hasan Ali Khan.

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filled with despair. He took off his turban and prayed to God for victory. The prayer was granted and the enemy took to flight. The Afghans gave them a hot pursuit. About 30,000 Sikhs (should be 3,000) were slain, and 500[1] drowned in river Jehlam in an attempt at crossing it ; while 2,000 of them safely reached the opposite bank."[2] The heads of Sikhs laden on hundreds of camels were sent to Peshawar to please Timur Shah.

Recovery of Multan : This news greatly encouraged Timur Shah to recover Multan. He ordered Zangi Khan to march along the eastern bank of river Indus. The Shah advanced along the western bank. The Sikhs followed Zangi Khan at a distance of about 30 kms. A fierce attack was led upon the Sikhs by Zangi Khan Kamalzai near Leiah. Just at that moment a storm began. Clouds of dust darkened the sky. A war drum of the Sikhs fell into the hands of the Afghans. It was forcefully beaten. The Sikhs on hearing the sound of their war drum ran towards it. They were all slain. The remaining Sikh army took to flight. Timur Shah joined Zangi Khan, and pursued the Sikhs upto the walls of Multan. The Sikhs took up their position in the fort and closed the city gates.

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Early in January, 1780, Timur Shah laid siege to the town of Multan. Timur Shah expected reinforcements for the Sikhs garrison, and in that event he considered his own resources insufficient. He therefore at the head of a select contingent marched to Bahawalpur, 56 kms south-east, to secure reinforcements for himself. The major portion of his army was left at Multan. The Nawab of Bahawalpur, gave the Shah 12,000 troops and Ghulam Ali Khan Letti paid him tribute. Just then came the news that Jassa Singh, Gujar Singh, Haqiqat Singh, Lahna Singh, Bhanga Singh and other Sikh chiefs were coming from Lahore at the head of 15,000 horsemen for the relief of Multan.

Timur Shah at once hurried from Bahawalpur towards Multan, and met the relieving Sikh force at Shujabad, where a severe battle was fought on 8 February,* 1780, from morning till afternoon. The Sikhs lost the day with 2,000 men in killed and wounded, and then they fled towards Lahore. Timur Shah despatched a detachment of 20,000

[1]Latif, *Panjab*, 299, says that 2,000 Sikhs were drowned in the river.

[2]Elphinstone speaks of this battle thus :

"He (Timur Shah) sent a light force in advance against a Sikh army near Multan which moved on by very rapid marches, surprised the Sikhs and totally defeated them." *Caubul*, 561.

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strong in pursuit of them. This force overtook the Sikhs at Hujra Muqim[1] Khan, 64 kms south-west of Lahore. The Shah's troops were successful, but they returned to Multan, plundering the country on their way as they went.

From Shujabad Timur hurried to Multan and delivered an assault on the town which fell after a short resistance. Timur ordered a general massacre in the city and the people suffered terribly. The Sikh army consisting of 7,000 horse retired into the fort which was besieged in turn. Negotiations for capitulation were commenced soon after by Abdul Karim Babar. The Sikh garrison in view of shortage of provisions expressed willingness to surrender provided they were allowed to depart for their homes in peace.

This condition was accepted and the fort fell into Timur Shah's hands on 18 February, 1780. The Sikhs fully armed and with all their property were allowed to depart in safety. At this Forster in 1783 remarked: "Which the Sicques, contrary to the spirit of their national character, evacuated, after a weak resistance. This surrender might on the first view be termed pusillanimous, especially when the inactive disposition of Timur is considered ; but it seems to have been a natural consequence of their eternal divisions, and the fears entertained by the body at large, of the increase of individual power." Muzaffar Khan was appointed governor of Multan at the head of 20,000 horse ; whilst Shuja'at Khan, Azim Khan and several other Afghan chiefs were given to him as assistants.

Emperor Shah Alam II sent his kinsman presents at Multan. Timur Shah conveyed the good tidings of his reconquest of Multan to Emperor Shah Alam II at Delhi accompanied by suitable presents. These were received by the Emperor on March 3, 1780. To celebrate this victory Timur Shah struck coins at Multan for the years 1780-86, and 1788-92. These coins are preserved at the Central Museum, Lahore. Gian Singh states that on the boundary line of Multan province with the Sikh territory, Timur Shah built twenty forts such as Sultanpur, Kusakpadhri, Thil, Bagge Pind and Makhyale. Timur stayed in Multan for some time, and on the approach of hot weather he returned to Afghanistan.

[1]Gian Singh says that this fight took place at Shaikhupura. *Shamsher Khalsa*, 114.

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Third invasion, 1780-81

By the close of the rainy season of 1780, the Indian atmosphere was again filled with rumours of a fresh invasion by Timur Shah. A newsletter issued from the Emperor's court dated 19 September, 1780, stated that two letters of Timur Shah, one addressed to Nawab Amir-ul-Umara Najaf Khan, and the other to Zabita Khan, were received in Delhi. Another entry of 25 September reported that Timur Shah had sent letters to the Raja of Jammu, Muzaffar Khan, the governor of

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Multan, and Zabita Khan, asking them to collect grain for his troops. On 27 September it was recorded that Timur Shah had decided to leave for India on 4 October, 1780, and that Mughal Ali Khan had been appointed leader of the advance-guard, and that letters had been written to the Sikhs.

A note of the Emperor's court of 3 October, 1780, stated that Timur Shah was in Kabul upto 26 August, and would march to India on 1 October. On 12 October, it was recorded that Timur Shah was coming to India to punish Ghulam Ali Letti of Sind for his failure to pay the promised tribute of 15 lakhs. The report of 16 October, 1780, declared that Timur Shah was in Kabul till 22 September, 1780; that his agents had dispersed all over the country to recruit troops and that letters had been written to Ghulam Ali Letti for immediate remittance of the tribute.

Timur Shah marched to India in the cold weather of 1780. This time he directed his attention chiefly against Bahawalpur. Rukan-ud-daulah Muhammad Bahawal Khan who was tributary to Ahmad Shah had stopped paying tribute to Timur Shah. The Durrani army under the charge of several notable chiefs reached Multan, while Timur Shah followed in the rear. Bahawal Khan on hearing the news of the Shah's approach loaded his family, treasures and provisions on camels and took refuge in a fort situated in the heart of the waterless desert. The Shah's troops invaded Bahawalpur, plundered the city and burnt houses.

Shortly afterwards Timur Shah also reached this place. Timur Shah despatched Madad Khan with a strong contingent well supplied with food and water against the Nawab. He made satisfactory arrangements to provide the general with a fresh supply of water from Bahawalpur. Madad Khan besieged the fort where Bahawal Khan had taken shelter and dug three wells which yielded sufficient quantity of water. The defenders put forth strong resistance, and successfully combated all the efforts of the besiegers to take it by assault. In the course of an action the magazine in the fort caught fire, and a large number of the garrison were killed. This disheartened Bahawal Khan who sued for peace by sending his son to wait upon the Shah at Bahawalpur. He paid the arrears of tribute, acknowledged Timur Shah his master, promised to remain faithful in future, and agreed to supply troops to his overlord in case of a fight between him and the Sikhs. The Shah accepted this submission and taking Bahawal Khan's

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son with him by way of surety for good behaviour retired to Peshawar on his way to Kabul.

The Sikhs were afraid lest Timur Shah might invade their territories after the Bahawalpur campaign. In order to ward off this danger they attacked Multan. A news-letter of 5 November, 1780, states : "The Sikhs of Lahore about 20,000 horse, attacked Timur Shah's military post near Multan. The Afghans asked for peace. The Sikhs realized rakhi and returned to their places. They are realizing rakhi in all directions."

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Fourth invasion, December, 1785

Timur Shah was very anxious to reach Delhi to meet his kinsman, Shah Alam II, who had been frantically inviting him. But the country of the Sikhs lay between. All alone he was incapable of defeating them. He therefore resolved to win over the most influential Indian Princes in order to overcome the opposition of the Sikhs. Early in 1783 letters from the Shah and his Wazir were received by the Peshwa. Later, on 22 November, 1783, it was recorded at the Emperor's Court that Sikandar Shah, brother of Timur Shah, had come to India and was waiting at Ghaziabad with Rustam Khan, brother of Shah Vali Khan, to interview the Emperor. Timur Shah's letter was received on 19 February, 1784, by Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of India, in which the Shah asked him to "depute a confidant to the royal court to represent his wishes and sentiments," assuring him that "when his confidant arrives he will receive due attention."

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Timur Shah's plans did not succeed as he could not secure any active help from any Indian chief. The only friend on whom he could count was Shah Alam II. Timur Shah could not expect anything from the Emperor because he had no independent resources of his own, and had no real power. He was like a bird in a cage.

Timur Shah left Kabul in December, 1785, and encamped at Peshawar, on 18 December. Prince Humayun, the son of Timur Shah, crossed the Indus at Attock at the head of 20,000 men and was joined by Faiz Talab Khan and Karim Beg, the principal chiefs, near Attock with 10,000 men. His first object was to recover Kashmir. On the death of Haji Karimdad Khan, the governor of Kashmir in 1783, his youngest son Azad Khan, had expelled his two elder brothers, Murtaza Khan and Zaman[1] Khan, from the government of Kashmir. These two brothers had gone to Kabul and complained against Azad Khan.

Timur Shah's march as far as the river Indus alarmed even the British Government, and frightened the merchants and bankers of Delhi so much that they made preparations to leave the city. James Anderson, the British Resident at Sindhia's court, thought that the Shah's advance upon Delhi was "extremely impossible." His opinion was based upon the fact that Timur Shah first must fight or make peace with the Sikhs who had established their power in the Panjab between the Jamuna and the Indus. As the Shah was not prepared to fight the Sikhs, and the Sikhs would not make peace with him, such an event could not take place.

Azad Khan was a forceful young ruler. He displayed remarkable energy in establishing his authority in Kashmir, through rapacity and severity. He won over his troops by making gifts of cash and cloth. He also took in his service three thousand Sikhs, to bar Timur's path at Rawalpindi and not to let him enter Kashmir by that road. He attracted many daring young men to take up service under him. Timur Shah was not prepared to undertake two expeditions at the same time. As the Sikhs were ready to oppose his advance into the Panjab and Kashmir at Rawalpindi, the Shah asked Prince Humayun to halt at Hasan Abdal for a while and not to move farther. A Persian news-letter of the Emperor's Court, dated 11 May, 1786, at Kishanpur states :

"Timur Shah is encamped at Peshawar. He intended to send

[1]Narayan Kaul, 196b, calls them Pahalwan Khan and Maluk Khan. cf. also Kirpa Ram's *Gulzar-e-Kashmir*, 239.

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Humayun Shah to Delhi, but has given up the idea on account of the opposition of the Sikhs who occupy the intervening road." As the winter season had sufficiently advanced, and the passes leading into Kashmir were blocked by snow, it prevented large scale operations. The Shah despatched Kifayat Khan to advise the young governor to submit. Finding Azad Khan resolute and firm in his determination, he accepted his nominal submission with presents in cash and kind to the value of three lakhs and retired from Kashmir.

Timur Shah was not satisfied with this nominal submission. He sent a force of 30,000 under Murtaza Khan and Zaman Khan, the elder brothers of Azad Khan. They were accompanied by several notable chiefs such as Faiz Talab Khan Muhammadzai, Nawaz Jang Bangash Kohati, Zardar Khan Durrani and Burhan Khan Popalzai. The generals halted near the fort of Pakhli, built by Sa'adat Khan Swati, father-in-law of Azad Khan. Azad Khan lay encamped at this time at Muzaffarbad, 12 kms distant from Pakhli. The battle was fought on the banks of river Kishanganga. Azad Khan's general Mulla Azam Khan lost his life, and 2,000 of his soldiers were either killed or drowned. Azad Khan was about to flee in a boat leaving the field to his brothers, when his cousin Pahalwan Khan checked him, and advised him to deliver the assault again.

Pahalwan Khan reorganised the troops and renewed the fight. This time the imperial troops were defeated, and Burhan Khan Popalzai was taken prisoner. Azad Khan then victoriously marched to Srinagar. The Durrani troops rearranged themselves at Pakhli, and marched in pursuit of Azad Khan. Azad Khan on hearing this sallied from his capital and engaged the imperialists in a deadly battle near Baramulla, 55 kms from Srinagar. The imperial army was again defeated, and Nawaz Jang Bangash with his younger son including several other chiefs of note fell into the hands of the victors as captives.

The defeat of Murtaza Khan and Zaman Khan at the hands of Azad Khan, and their return to Peshawar with Faiz Talab Khan, enraged the Shah. He sent a larger force under Madad Khan Durrani and Payendah Khan. The new commanders entered Kashmir, fought a fierce battle with Azad Khan, at Khushipura and after several engagements defeated him. Azad Khan fled away to Punchh. He was imprisoned by the chief of the place, and informed Madad Khan. Meanwhile Azad Khan shot himself dead. Azad Khan's mother and wife were sent to Timur Shah. The Shah spared the life of the mother on the payment of a ransom of two lakhs of rupees ; while the

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governor's wife was admitted to the royal harem. Azad Khan at the time of his death was only twenty-seven years old.

A Marathi despatch of 18 January, 1786, states that Mahan Singh, father of Ranjit Singh, waited on Prince Humayun and asked him to place Kashmir under his control promising in return a tribute and co-operation of the Sikhs for his advance upon Delhi.

Another Marathi despatch of this time states that Raja Bijai Singh of Jodhpur sent his agents to Timur Shah to direct his forces after the conquest of Kashmir to Delhi to defeat the Marathas. The Raja suggested that if the Sikhs would not allow him an easy passage through the Panjab, he should march across Multan, Bahawalpur and Bikaner, and that the Rajput Rajas would accompany him to Delhi. Timur Shah declined this offer on the ground that his presence was required in his own country.

It appears that Warren Hastings before leaving India had written a letter to Timur Shah Durrani who replied to it through his special messenger Shah Abdullah. The latter having died on the way Timur Shah's Wazir Abdul Latif addressed a letter to the Governor-General early in 1786, in which he stated that the Shah's letter would be delivered to him by Sayyid Ghulam Naqshband Khan. The Governor-General conveyed his compliments in a letter dated December 11, 1786.

This letter ran as follows : "Acknowledges the receipt of his letter addressed to Mr. Hastings. Regrets that the reply has been delayed owing to the absence of Mr. Richard Johnson through whom the correspondence with the Shah was carried on. As Mr. Johnson has since returned the Governor-General takes the earliest opportunity of writing to him. Intimates that Mr. Hastings has left for Europe and that he (Mr. Macpherson) himself now holds office of the Governor-General, professes sincere friendship for the Shah. Says that the intervention of various independent governments between their countries prevents him from sending letters more frequently. Sends this letter through Ghulam Naqshband Khan and Ghulam Muhammad Khan, sons of the late Shah Abdullah Naqshbandi."[1]

Timur Shah returned to Kabul in May, 1786, on hearing the alarming news of the preparations of Shah Murad of Balkh to invade Afghanistan.

[1]*CPC*, VIII, 483 (1), 677.

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The fifth campaign, December, 1788

Vanguard baffled : The Rajput princes had been constantly applying to Timur Shah for assistance against Mahadji Sindhia. On a persistent request from Maharaja Bakht Singh, Timur Shah sent his Bakhshi Madad Khan in September, 1787, at the head of 15,000 horse, 5,000 foot and 1,700 camel riders. Their path was barred at Attock by the Sikhs. The Bakhshi did not cross the river and marched along the western bank of the Indus. The Sikhs did so on the other side of the river. Finding them ready to oppose him, he eventually gave up his advance and returned to Kabul.

Timur shah marched towards India : During the winter of 1788, rumours of a proposed invasion of Timur Shah were again rife in India.[1] Raja Bijai Singh of Jodhpur was making frantic appeals to

[1]William Palmer, the British Resident at Sindhia's court, doubted the authenticity of these rumours. "Rumours of Timur Shah's intention to invade Indostan this season still prevail, but I cannot discover any good foundation for them, and by the concurring accounts which I heard from travellers the state government and finances do not admit his undertaking so distant and expensive an enterprise." Dated Agra, 13 October, 1788.

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the Shah for his help against Sindhia. The Nawab of Bahawalpur had not paid tribute, and he appeared quite disaffected from the Shah. The annual subsidy from Sind had remained unpaid for several years past. Besides Timur Shah had learnt the sad news that his brother-in-law, Shah Alam II, had been deposed by Ghulam Qadir Rohilla on 30 July, blinded on 10 August, and numerous atrocities were committed on the royal family during two and a half months' Rohilla rule over Delhi.

In consequence Timur Shah started on his Indian campaign in the beginning of winter of 1788. He marched from Peshawar on 10 November, crossed the Indus at Attock on 14 November and advanced towards Multan. His army at this time consisted of 120,000 cavalry. He wrote letters to Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan to secure grain, cloth and other necessary material for his forces. On the way he was joined by Ghazi-ud-din Imad-ul-Mulk, an ex-wazir of Delhi, and the vakil of the Raja of Jodhpur, both of whom requested the Shah to settle the affairs of Hindustan.

At Bahawalpur : Timur Shah made straight for Bahawalpur, avoiding any conflict with the Sikhs as far as possible. On 13 December, 1788, he was 75 kms to the north-west of Multan. The Sikhs began to gather in that direction to arrest his progress ; but on Timur's sending a strong detachment against them, they dispersed without coming to an action.

Timur's troops entered Bahawalpur by the end of December, and early in January, 1789, a fight took place between the Shah's army and the Daudpotra chief of Bahawalpur, in which the latter was defeated and he took to flight towards Bikaner. Three detachments of the Shah marched on the city of Bahawalpur, and massacred the inhabitants. The Bahawalpur chief found safety in suing for peace. He paid a tribute of ten lakhs and received a pardon.

The Raja of Jodhpur : The agents of the Raja of Jodhpur waited upon the Shah again, and offered twenty lakhs of rupees for liberating the Raja from the Maratha subjection. The Shah demanded forty lakhs of rupees, and also pointed out that his troops should not suffer in the desert for want of water. The Raja promised to supply 3,000 camel loads of water bags.

On hearing this news Mahadji Sindhia wrote a threatening letter to the Raja of Jodhpur, saying that he might declare his independence of the Marathas with the help of the Shah, but on his retirement he

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would experience serious consequences of his defiance.[1] Rae Dhanje, the chief of Kachh Bhuj, wrote to Sindhia that Timur's army would have to pass through his country to reach Jodhpur, and if Sindhia would help him, he could starve the Afghan soldiers, by destroying all possible supplies of water on their way. This disquieting news exasperated Timur Shah, who at the persuasion of Sindhia's vakil unceremoniously dismissed the vakil of Jodhpur with the following reply : "You saw the fall of Shah Alam II, and you being a loyal subject remained a spectator only. It was Mahadji Sindhia alone who punished Ghulam Qadir and restored the prestige of the royal house. Now you want me to attack the same person. This I can never do."

Thereafter Timur Shah directed his attention against Sind for the collection of arrears of tribute, and he succeeded in exacting about sixty lakhs of rupees.[2]

The letter of Lord Cornwallis to Timur Shah : While in India Timur Shah wrote letters to all the noted chiefs of Northern India including the Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis. The Governor-General addressed the following letter to Timur Shah in reply :

"Written 13 February, 1789.

"Your Majesty's shukka, replete with expressions of favour and kindness to me, and desiring that as Your Majesty's illustrious House from the first period that the victorious banners were carried into the wide plains of Hindostan, and the city of Delhi submitted to the royal mandate and the deceased king Alumgeer experienced the royal clemency and was replaced on the throne of Hindostan, and after his death the same favour was shown to Shaw Allum, to whom Your Majesty also continued the same conduct, had pursued the rules laid down among kings renowned for following the laws of justice and countenancing princes of high power and that Your Majesty had heard that Ghulam Qadir Yosufzai, the Rohillah, on the presumption of his power and regardless of the laws of gratitude had forgot the favour received by him and his ancestors from the royal family of

[1]"How can you make a lasting peace by paying the Shah forty lakhs of rupees and inviting his army into your country ? Would that settlement last longer than the duration of the Shah's stay here ? You have daily dealings with us ; you will have to pay the tribute sooner or later, and we will realise it."

[2]Timur Shah never penetrated into the Panjab as far as Lahore. But Gian Singh on pages 914-25 says that he did so. He describes several skirmishes between him and the Sikhs, in one of which he states his general Ataullah Khan was killed in fighting against Natha Singh near Sialkot.

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Delhi and leaguing himself with thoughtless people had raised another to the throne of Hindostan and thrown disorder into the Sultanut and army—that as protection and aid to the king Shaw Allum is incumbent on Your Majesty's illustrious House, and I am one of the connections of it and the friend of His Majesty Shaw Allum, you are pleased to desire me to join other European Powers and should His Majesty Shaw Allum be still alive, replace him in the plenitude of his power, and if he should have departed this life, to establish his son on the throne of Hindostan, that as Your Majesty is bent on this object, I be not dilatory, but evince my zeal and gratitude by my exertions to obey Your Majesty's commands without delay, arrived and has conferred high honour on me. May it please Your Majesty the proofs of friendship which Your Majesty's illustrious ancestors evinced towards the King of Delhi are well-known to the world, and have reached the ears of the Princes and Powers in Europe.

"Now that Your Majesty is graciously pleased to show your royal pleasure for the happiness of Shaw Allum and to express such indignation at the rebellious conduct of the Rohillah and his ungrateful associates, the benevolence which is the characteristic of your illustrious family will be more published to the world, and call forth the prayers of mankind for the duration and prosperity of such virtues. May Providence for ever keep Your Majesty under the protection! How can I sufficiently express the pleasure I receive from the royal commands, and what greater happiness can I experience than while I represent the joy felt by everyone at the object Your Majesty is bent upon, having been accomplished by the zeal and exertions of the real well-wishers of Shaw Allum. God be praised that the wicked Rohillah has experienced the infamy and punishment due to his ungrateful conduct, that Shaw Allum is again replaced on the throne of his ancestors and the splendour of the Sultanut will shine in the plains of Hindostan as heretofore. Doubtless ere this Your Majesty will have heard these particulars, and under this idea, I refrain from recapitulating them, but expressing my respect of Your Majesty's royal commands and my attachment to the illustrious House of which Your Majesty now displays the inherited disposition for clemency and benevolence. I hope to be frequently honoured with the royal commands."

Timur Shah returns to Kabul : When Timur Shah was busy in negotiating with the Mirs of Sind he heard the distressing news that disturbances were created on the frontier of his country by Shah

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Murad of Turan. Timur Shah at once decided upon a retreat. The tidings of his return gave a sigh of relief to all the Indian princes, including the British.

The approach of Timur Shah had kept different powers of India in alarm for a long time with respect to his intentions, but it now subsided on Timur's return with his army to his own capital.

Certain merchants of Delhi informed the British Resident at Lucknow that they had received intelligence from their correspondents at Multan that Timur Shah wanted to place his son Humayun on the throne of Delhi and in this scheme he was supported by the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur.

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Intelligence of Timur Shah's activities, 1789-92

Timur Shah did not invade India again. But the political atmosphere in this country was never free from fear of a fresh campaign by him. The result was that the Indian chiefs kept themselves informed of his activities. Timur Shah also with a view to find a

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suitable opportunity for invading it employed agents to supply him the information of the political situation in India. This gave rise to many false alarms, and the Indian powers felt greatly perturbed; but ultimately their fears proved groundless. The suspicion in the Indian mind may be attributed to the Durrani tradition of incessant plundering raids, established by his father, the impetuous Ahmad Shah Durrani. No Indian of those days was prepared to believe that Timur Shah would break this time-honoured custom, particularly when they learnt of his activities in other parts of his kingdom, and the ever-recurring invitations from Indian princes. Below are given the extracts from intelligence of Timur Shah's activities :

19 March, 1789. Timur Shah was about to invade India.

January, 1790. A friendly letter from Timur Shah was received by Shah Alam II.

April, 1790. One of Timur Shah's officers named Qazi wrote secret letters against Timur Shah to Shah Murad of Turan. These letters were intercepted and brought to the notice of the king who killed Qazi, imprisoned his relations and confiscated his property.

May, 1790. Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Khan, his son Jilani Khan and Prince Ahsan Bakht were on their way to Kabul via Kangra to invite Timur Shah to invade India.

11 May, 1790. Timur Shah's agent had not yet arrived at Delhi.

July, 1790. Mirza Ahsan Bakht had left Kangra for Afghanistan.

6 August, 1790. Timur Shah and Shah Murad of Turan were fighting.

3 September, 1790. Timur Shah's vakil had reached Lahore to win over the Sikhs.

26 September, 1790. Ghazi-ud-din Khan was received with great honour by Shah Zaman.

December, 1790. Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, a big Sikh chief of the neighbourhood of Attock had died, and Timur Shah was therefore contemplating an invasion of India.

19 December, 1790. Sadullah Khan, an ambassador of Timur Shah, visited Delhi and paid homage to the Emperor on 19 December, 1790, offering five gold coins, and delivered Timur Shah's letter to him. The Emperor conferred upon him a robe of honour consisting of three pieces, and granted shawls to his companions. Through the same agent Timur Shah sent a khil'at to Mahadji Sindhia for punishing Ghulam Qadir. Sindhia was at Sambhal. The Emperor sent the ambassador in the company of Tahmas Khan Miskin to wait on Sindhia there. Sadullah Khan was given Rs. 600 and

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Tahmas Khan Miskin Rs. 100 for food, etc., while on journey to Sindhia's camp, where they reached Mahadji on 9 February, 1791. Sindhia honoured Sadullah Khan by bestowing upon him Rs. 12,000, some jewels, and a robe of honour of five pieces, and gave as presents for Timur Shah two elephants, horses, some jewels and five khil'ats, and his agent Wajih-ud-din Khan accompanied the ambassador. Sadullah Khan took leave of Sindhia on 19 June, 1791. The Nawab Wazir of Oudh also sent two elephants and several other valuable gifts for Timur Shah. These agents took the route through Bahawalpur, Multan and Derajat, avoiding the Sikhs on the way.

21 December, 1790. Timur Shah defeated Shah Murad, and then peace was patched up between them. According to the terms of agreement Timu (Sehun or Oxus) river was fixed as the boundary line between their territories. Shah Murad left a five-hazari-chief with Timur Shah as a hostage. A rumour stated that Timur Shah would come to Peshawar.

April, 1791. Timur Shah was in Kabul. He had written letters to his chiefs to collect their forces as he intended to invade India.

23 April, 1791. Timur Shah sent a letter to Cornwallis, the Governor-General, and gave an account of his activities on the northern frontier.

May, 1791. Mirza Ahsan Bakht had reached Kabul and would be received in audience by Timur Shah in a day or two.

11 May, 1791. Timur Shah was marching from Kabul to Peshawar.

July, 1791. Timur Shah's agent was in Delhi, and was about to leave for Afghanistan in a month's time.

25 July, 1791. Timur Shah was making great preparations to invade India.

31 August, 1791. Edward Otto Ives, the British Resident at Lucknow, wrote to Lord Cornwallis that several persons charged with despatches from Timur Shah arrived there. One of them was Mir Nasir-ud-din, a relation of Ghulam Muhammad Khan. "It is very difficult to distinguish who, among these pretended vakils, are really sent. But I am fully of opinion that if the letters be authentic they are all obtained by private influence and for private purposes."

September, 1791. Raja Bijai Singh invited Timur Shah to India; but the Shah was busy in his own affairs as Shah Murad of Balkh was about to invade Afghanistan.

11 September, 1791. The Durrani chiefs were revolting against Timur Shah, and he therefore was trying to win over other tribes

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such as the Qizalbashes. He proposed to invade India in cold weather. His letters were received by Nawab Wazir and Sindhia.

28 September, 1791. A strong rumour prevailed about Timur Shah's invasion of India.

October, 1791. Shah Murad's brother Adil Shah sought shelter with Timur Shah against his brother. Shah Murad desired his immediate return to Bokhara; but Timur Shah paid no heed to this request. Timur Shah sent orders to Shahdad Khan to build a bridge on the Indus, and he encamped opposite Attock with 8,000 troops. There was, however, no probability of his invading India as the Shah was facing disturbances in his own country. Mirza Ahsan Bakht was staying at Peshawar in Shah Vali Khan's mansion.

15 October, 1791. Timur Shah was ready to invade India.

24 October, 1791. Subuktullah Khan arrived at Lucknow with letters from Timur Shah and his Wazir Faizullah Khan for the Nawab Wazir of Oudh and the British Resident at his court. He reported that Mirza Ahsan Bakht was granted an interview by Timur Shah at Charbagh midway between Kabul and Peshawar and the Shah promised to accompany him with an army in the following year. The Prince had fallen ill, and in order to avoid the inclemency of winter at Kabul returned to Peshawar.

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4 November, 1791. Timur Shah was expected at Peshawar after 'Id.

29 November, 1791. Timur Shah was at Kabul and had summoned Ahsan Bakht there.

27 January, 1792. Jamil, an agent of Mirza Ahsan Bakht, arrived at Delhi. He was presented to the Emperor by Shah Nizam-ud-din. He told His Majesty that Prince Ahsan Bakht was well received by Timur Shah, and Yusaf Ali eunuch was negotiating for him.

11 February, 1792. It was reported that Timur Shah's troops on the Indus had beaten the Sikhs, and that at Mirza Ahsan Bakht's intercession Timur Shah had granted pardon to Ghazi-ud-din Khan for having murdered Emperor Alamgir II.

19 February, 1792. From the perusal of letters received from Amritsar it was generally believed that Timur Shah had stationed 10,000 cavalry with Ahsan Bakht, and assigned to him Rohtas and certain other places, and issued orders to his chiefs on this side of the Indus to join the prince.

22 February, 1792. Ghazi-ud-din's letter from Bahawalpur was received at Delhi by Shah Nizam-ud-din stating that he was summoned by Timur Shah.

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23 February, 1792. Mirza Ahsan Bakht's letter from Peshawar announced that Timur Shah was about to proceed to India.

25 February, 1792. Prince Ahsan Bakht and Nawab Ghazi-ud-din proposed leading an expedition into the Sikh country ; but Ranjit Singh was prepared to oppose their advance.

1 March, 1792. Sadullah Khan and Wajih-ud-din Khan waited at Peshawar on Mirza Ahsan Bakht who granted each of them a khil'at of three pieces.

March, 1792. Sadullah Khan and Wajih-ud-din Khan left Peshawar for Kabul. Shah Murad was creating disorder in Timur's country, and the latter had asked the ruler of Badakhshan to help him.

21 March, 1792. Mahadji Sindhia was sending Rs. 50,000 to his agent Wajih-ud-din Khan in Kabul by a *hundi* to buy horses. Nawab Nizam Ali Khan (of Haidarabad) was considering to despatch Tahmas Khan Miskin to Kabul to procure for him a robe of honour from Timur Shah.

12 May, 1792. Some letters of Mirza Ahsan Bakht were intercepted by Timur's men and Timur Shah on learning their subject-matter of intrigue was angry with the Prince. He sent secret instructions to the Governor of Multan to keep Ahsan Bakht under surveillance.

September, 1792. Timur Shah was soon expected at Attock.

11 September, 1792. Timur Shah's letters arrived for the Emperor, Nawab Wazir of Oudh, British Resident at Lucknow, Begam Samru, Zafaryab Khan and Muhammad Sadiq Khan.

12 September, 1792. Shah Nizam-ud-din declared that all rumours about Timur's Indian invasion were false.

14 November, 1792. The Governor-General sent presents to Timur Shah in return for those received from Kabul. The Governor-General instructed his agent, in charge of the presents, to procure "general information relative to Timur Shaw's government and politics."

G.F. Cherry wrote to Edward Otto Ives, Resident at Lucknow, on 14 November, 1792, from Calcutta :

"The Governor-General having been pleased to send presents to Timur Shaw under charge of Golaum Mahomed Khan, the Vakil from Timur Shaw at this Durbar, in return for presents received some time ago, I am directed to inform you that Golaum Mahomed Khan will leave this (place) in a day or two with the several articles on board a boat and will go to Kaunpoor. "As his lordship wishes that every assistance should be furnished to Golaum Mahomed Khan in order that the presents may be conveyed with as much despatch

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and safety as possible, he has desired me to consign the presents to your care, and to request that you will endeavour to procure a trustworthy man of respect and abilities to accompany Golaum Mahomed Khan to Kabul. His Lordship's wish in this respect is to avail himself of the opportunity now offered to procure general information relative to Timur Shaw's government and politics, as far as may be practicable, without injury to the delicacy of his Court, and without the appearance of a specific deputation for this purpose. It may also be practicable to ascertain further particulars of the countries that lay on the road to whom they are subject, and, as far as can be, the disposition of their rulers. These general points will, his Lordship trusts, be sufficient to notify to you his object in sending a person in company with Golaum Mahomed Khan, and he leaves the choice of the person and any further instructions to you, wishing at the same time that the letters and presents may be left entirely to Golaum Mahomed Khan, in order that the company of any other person with him may not be construed into a deputation from this Government, which during the present rumours relative to Timur Shaw's motions might occasion reports and surmises wholly improper.

"A list of the presents is enclosed. They are packed up as suitable hand carriage as the nature of them will allow, and his Lordship desires that you will, under the pretence of the person who will go from you to assist in their safe conveyance, give every aid in your power."

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Death of Timur Shah, 18 May, 1793

About the end of 1792 Timur Shah made up his mind to invade India once again. He made suitable arrangements for his various provinces in Afghanistan to avoid any disturbance to distract his attention from the settlement of Indian affairs. Prince Mahmud was left in charge of Herat, Humayun in Kandhar and Zaman in Kabul. He advanced as far as Peshawar, and punished several rebellious chiefs in the Khaibar Pass and the hills. He summoned Fatah Khan Yusafzai, the governor of Muzaffarabad, to him and put him to death for his refractory behaviour. Soon afterwards he was taken ill with inflammation of intestines accompanied by violent fits of vomiting. The physicians treated him well; but they could not cure him of the disease. They suggested change of climate, and recommended him to repair to Kabul immediately. Timur Shah realized that his end had come. He wished to die in his favourite city of Kabul, a place which he liked best in his empire. In spite of the discomfort and inconvenience the journey involved, he returned to Kabul. There after a couple of days of his arrival he passed away on 18 May, 1793.[1]

Timur Shah was buried at Kabul, and a beautiful mausoleum was built over his grave. Sir Vincent Eyre found in 1842 only two places worth seeing at Kabul, one of them being Timur Shah's mausoleum. He wrote :

"The city is very irregularly laid out, and, with exception of the celebrated covered bazar and the tomb of Timur Shah, contained no public buildings at all striking."[2]

Character

Timur Shah is declared by all writers indolent and pleasure-loving. Elphistone says : "Timoor Shauh having now obtained undisturbed possession of his father's kingdom, gave way to his natural indolence. His whole policy was directed to secure his tranquillity : he never appears to have thought of aggrandizing himself, and all the operations in which he was afterwards engaged, were intended merely for the defence of his dominions." Masson has nothing but a harsh ver-

[1]The news of his death reached Delhi on 15 June, 1793. *Delhi Chronicle*, 423. Ferrier believed that Timur Shah had been poisoned by one of the women of his harem, the sister of a Popalzai chief, who was hostile to him. *History of the Afghans*, 104.

[2]This Chhata Bazar was destroyed by General Pollock in October, 1842, during the First Afghan War.

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dict for him : "To Ahmed Shah succeeded his son, Taimur Shah, who, as is too often the case in these countries, lived on the reputation of his father and passed his reign in pleasure, or the gratification of his sensual appetites."

Aggrandizement is no virtue, and if Timur Shah, led by his peaceful temperament, did not indulge in this unfair pursuit, he should not be condemned simply for not possessing a passion for war. Timur did not follow in the footsteps of his father to carry on ruthless campaigns over a vast territory for various reasons. He did not possess equal enthusiasm for warlike activities, and whatever ambition he had for foreign hostilities it was damped by the unfavourable circumstances in which he was placed. A French officer who toured in Afghanistan some time after Timur's death says : "The serdars who had placed his father on the throne, and divided with him the directions of affairs, considered themselves much more like the tutors of his son than his quncillors. The king endeavoured for a long period to release himself from this thraldom, but, seeing that his efforts were vain, he gave himself up to that life of ease and effiminacy with which European authors have so sharply reproached him, without reflecting whether it was possible for him to follow a different line of conduct...I had occasion, during my journey in Afghanistan, to converse with some respectable serdars, who, having held high positions at the court of this sovereign, were able to appreciate his character. These individuals assured me that the intelligence and activity of this prince were equal to his courage and firmness ; and it was these qualities which had led his father to give him the preference over his other sons ; but it would have been absolute folly for him to have entered into an open struggle with the old serdars, who were venerated by the Afghans, with a view of concentrating all the power within his own hands, for this contest could terminate only to his disadvantage, and would have ended in his complete ruin."

Thus Timur Shah followed the only wise course of not interfering with the nobles, and this admirable policy allowed him a peaceful reign of twenty-one years. He devoted his energy and power to internal administration, and succeeded in maintaining the integrity of his vast dominions in spite of numerous difficulties. Malleson observed : "Timur Shah governed his rude country internally as few men have governed it." Timur Shah was loved by his people as he gave them peace and treated them liberally and kindly. G.T. Vigne marked the regard and esteem the Afghans cherished for him even after the

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expiry of nearly fifty years :

"The reign of Timur Shah was still remembered by the older inhabitants of Kabul, as that in which the city enjoyed its greatest modern prosperity. He was a liberally minded ruler, and was known to lend a man money, and tell him to go and trade with it."

With regard to India, it may be pointed out that Timur Shah directed his attention towards Peshawar, Kashmir, Multan, Sind and Bahawalpur. It may be mentioned that these regions were overwhelmingly Muslim in population, and consequently Timur Shah was sure of not meeting with much opposition there from the Sikhs. The Sikhs, whom he had known from his childhood, were avoided by him as far as possible, and he never summoned up courage to attack them in the heart of their country. The recovery of Multan from the Sikhs is undoubtedly a remarkable achievement made by him. Even there he allowed the Sikhs to depart in peace with all their property. In three of his Indian provinces, Kashmir, Bahawalpur and Sind, his power was prejudicially affected by his peaceful tendency, as the governors of these outlying territories no longer feeling the heel of the invader threw off allegiance to Timur Shah. They submitted whenever Timur invaded their country and assumed an independent attitude after his retirement to Afghanistan.

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CHAPTER 21

Shah Zaman's First Three Invasions

This account is based on the detailed papers submitted to the British Resident at Lucknow by Ghulam Sarwar, an English intelligencer, who passed right across the Panjab in 1793 on his way to Kabul and back again in 1795. His statements were accepted as authentic by the Governor-General and are in agreement with other contemporary authorities in general.

The original papers of Ghulam Sarwar with the exception of one could not be traced. Hence their translation into English made by British clerical staff was consulted. This is evidently full of mistakes, some of which in spite of the writer's best efforts could not be corrected.

The Sikh resources

Before giving an account of their conflict with the Afghan monarch it appears appropriate to study the material resources of the notable Sikh chiefs who played their part in the last act of the drama enacted in this country by foreign invaders.

The Sikhs possessed plenty of wealth, territory, artillery, troops and forts. Besides, their subjects whether Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs were happy and contented under their rule. "The ryots of the Subah of Lahore," says Ghulam Sarwar, "who are of the Sikhs and Afghans, a nation of soldiers, pay one-fourth part of the produce of their lands; payment in cash is no longer in use, but the usage above-mentioned is prevalent. Hence the ryots of the Subah of Lahore are contented and happy."

On the other hand complete disunity and disagreement prevailed among the Sikh chiefs, and they were wasting their energy and resources in mutual warfare. On February 5, 1794, Malet wrote

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to the Court of Directors : "There is the greatest enmity among them and continual war about disputed boundary. They have no union whatever. Everyone wishes the destruction of his neighbour and seeks to extirpate him. The old chiefs, who were experienced in war and had fought against Ahmad Shah are all dead, and their children are untried."

As regards the total military strength of the Taruna Dal which invariably engaged itself in resisting the invaders, without any assistance from the sardars of the Budha Dal, various estimates are given by contemporary authorities ; but there is not much difference among them. Browne estimated it at 73,900 both horse and foot. Ghulam Sarwar assessed it at 68,000. Imam-ud-din computed it at 70,000. The author of *Haqiqat* on page 35 put it at about 50,000 horse and a large body of infantry. James Rennell appraised the total strength of Sikh cavalry at 100,000, half of which could safely be allowed to the Taruna Dal.

Ambitious shemes of Shah Zaman

Shah Zaman succeeded to the throne of Afghanistan on 18 May, 1793, after the death of his father Timur Shah. He was a young man of twenty-three at the time of his succession. There were several revolts against him, but he cleverly suppressed them all. The greatest need of the hour was the task of consolidating the loose parts of the Durrani kingdom. Instead, he chose to strike the imagination of his people by the more glorious achievements in an outer field. He cherished hopes of an Indian Empire, or to recover the Indian provinces which had been conquered by his grandfather, or at least to acquire a huge booty from Panjab and Delhi. He had several advantages to realize this objective. The Musalmans in the Panjab welcomed him as a deliverer from the grip of Kafirs. Whenever he descended on the plains of the Panjab, the Muslim chiefs rallied round his banners. Emperor Shah Alam II and the crown prince begged him again and again to come to Delhi and take a royal princess as a wife and booty into the bargain. The Rohillas who were his Afghan brothers offered him full help in men, money and material. These things were to tempting for a visionary and raw youth. He forgot two obstacles against these advantages. They were rebellious princes in his family and the Sikhs in the Panjab. Both these impediments were too baffling to overcome. In fact his talents were not equal to his ambitious projects, and he met with little

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success. His expeditions not only proved fruitless, but also cost him his crown as well as his eyes.

Afghan agents in India

Shah Zaman deputed several emissaries to the courts of influential Indian chiefs to excite general alarm by giving exaggerated reports of the Afghan forces. Ghulam Muhammad left Kabul shortly after the Shah's accession, and waited on the Mughal Emperor and Maratha sardars. Shah Alam II granted to Ghulam Muhammad a khilat of three pieces and Rs. 500 for his travelling expenses. Gopal Rao Raghunath on behalf of Sindhia provided him with twenty-one robes of honour and two elephants for his master ; while a khilat of four pieces and Rs. 5,000 were given to the agent.

Ibrahim Beg, another ambassador of the Shah, brought letters for the Nawab Wazir of Oudh and Edward Otto Ives, the British Resident at Lucknow, and in return received robes of honour. The envoy presented the Nawab with a khilat and three horses on behalf of his master and received Rs. 5,000 for his travelling expenses.

The Governor-General was in the know of the Afghan agents' activities, and he wanted to maintain friendly relations with the Afghan monarch. He addressed two letters to Shah Zaman, one of condolence on the death of his father, and the other of congratulations on his accession to the throne. These letters were accompanied with presents.

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Shah Zaman's First Invasion, 1794

Mirza Ahsan Bakht, a section of the royal family of Delhi, pressed the Shah to invade India. The ambassador of Tipu Sultan who was then in Kabul also instigated him by holding out tempting offers of money. In view of the favourable reports of his agents, and being goaded by some Indian Princes, Shah Zaman decided upon an invasion of India. He issued orders to the governor of Peshawar to build a bridge of boats on the Indus at Attock. He gathered troops and left Kabul on 15 December, 1793.

The Shah halted at Peshawar for some time to mature his plans for reaching Delhi. Two routes were open to him. The easier and shorter road passed through Lahore; but it was dominated by the

[1]Once Shah Zaman remarked in his court that India offered a free field to the invader but nobody was prepared to undertake the conquest of that country. (Akhbarat British Museum, Or, 4609, folio 96b)

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Sikhs. The safer way was via Multan, Bahawalpur and Bikaner ; but it was longer and more tedious.

Shah Zaman directed his general Payendah Khan to reconnoitre the strategic positions of the Sikhs. The leader of the advance-guard crossed the Indus at Attock with 5,000 men, and advanced for 50 kms. At this place a Sikh contingent opposed the invaders with a view to check their progress. The skirmish ended in a victory for the Afghans. From here the vanguard was recalled.

Tour through the Trans-Indus territory

Before attacking the Sikhs it was considered necessary to consolidate his rule in the Indian provinces of the Shah's dominions. This was a step in the right direction. Shah Zaman did not yield to the offer of Ahsan Bakht of visiting Ranjit Singh who lay encamped at Jhang to secure his co-operation for a safe passage.

Shah Zaman proceeded onward. He halted on the western bank of river Jehlam for forty days. The town of Jehlam was plundered and burnt. He then moved towards Multan. Ghulam Nabi Letti, the chief of Bhakar and Leiah paid homage to the Shah and accompanied him to Multan. Some distance before Multan he was waited upon by Faizullah Khan, son of Bahawal Khan, and Muzaffar Khan, the governor of Multan. Ghulam Nabi was in arrears of revenues by Rs. 1,20,000. He had no money at the moment, and through the interposition of Muzaffar Khan, it was settled that he should give five hundred camels in lieu of that sum. He was obliged to leave with the Shah, his grandson, Ghulam Ali, a ten-year-old lad, as a hostage.

Ghulam Nabi failed in supplying the stipulated number of camels. His grandson was advised by his Hindu guardian to steal his way into the Wazir's harem and to weep and cry before the women. This moved the heart of the Minister's chief wife and the boy was allowed to go back home. Shah Zaman sent urgent orders to the Amirs of Sind, and forced them to pay twenty-four lakhs of rupees of the tribute due from them.

Shah Zaman then returned to Peshawar, and despatched Payendah Khan to Kashmir to secure submission of the governor and realize tribute. The Afghan general seized the governor who was brought to the Shah. Abdullah Khan Alkozai was appointed to the post of the governor of Kashmir.

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Prince Humayun captured

Shah Zaman was still at Peshawar when Prince Humayun fell into his hands. Humayun, a brother of the Shah, was in open rebellion, and was chased from place to place by the Shah's spies. He fled from Afghanistan, and passing through the Bora Pass with his family and servants numbering about a hundred appeared at Leiah in order to escape to Kashmir. He was resting under a tree at a well, when Muhammad Khan Sadozai, the officer of the place, fell upon him. In the action Humayun's favourite son Ahmad was killed. This broke the Prince's heart, and out of despair he clung to his corpse. He was at once arrested, and all of his companions were taken prisoners. They were sent to Shah Zaman who blinded his brother, and promoted Muhammad Khan to the governorship of Derah Ismail Khan. Shah Zaman then returned to Kabul.

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Shah Zaman's Second Invasion, 1795

Shah Zaman sent several agents to India to incite Muslim chiefs to join him against the Sikhs and Marathas. He sent letters to the Nizam of Haidarabad and also to the Governor-General in November, 1794, which was received at Calcutta on 6 October, 1795.

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On 28 May, 1795, it was published in the *Calcutta Gazette* that Shah Zaman "meditated an incursion into Hindustan, but had been prevented for the present by the hostility of his brothers who have possession of Herat." About the middle of 1795, Shah Zaman's brother Prince Mahmud revolted at Herat. Shah Zaman led an expedition against him ; but on his submission he retained him in his office.

On his return to Kabul he was waited upon by Mirza Ahsan Bakht and Jilani Khan son of ex-minister Ghazi-ud-din Khan, who urged him to invade India. At the same time Ghulam Muhammad Khan, paternal uncle of Ahmad Ali Khan, the Rohilla chief of Rampur, who was offended at the succession of his young nephew, and was instigated by Nawab Asaf-ud-daulah of Lucknow, went to Kabul to induce Shah Zaman to invade India and to reinstate him in office. Besides, Shah Alam II was in regular correspondence with Shah Zaman. He was pressing the Shah to invade India and to relieve him of the Maratha control.

On 24 September, 1795, he remarked : "Zaman Shah intends invading India every year ; but owing to disturbances in his own country has no time to spare for this side." On a subsequent occasion he said : "Nobody invades India which has no opposition to offer."

The Durrani monarch allured by the representations of these chiefs and impelled by his own sentiments resolved on a campaign into India. Before leaving Afghanistan he strengthened his position by marrying his son to the daughter of Mahmud Shah, the ruler of Herat, and Mahmud's son was married to his own daughter. By these alliances he thought to remove the possible danger of rebellion in his absence from the country.

Advance to Peshawar

Shah Zaman left Kabul on 3 November, 1795. He gave out that he was going on a hunting expedition to Shakardara ; but from there he quietly marched to Peshawar. This he did with a view not to cause alarm for fear of a revolt in his absence.

From Peshawar he sent Ahsan Bakht to Multan to collect men and money. One contingent of the advance-guard was permitted to cross the Indus, and another was instructed to remain on the western bank of the same river. The Sikhs fought with the advance-guard and drove it back across the river.

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Ranjit Singh's diplomacy

This success was achieved by the Sikhs against a small Durrani force. Disunited as the Sikhs were, they knew it full well that they would not be able to check the advance of the whole Afghan army. Most of the Sikh chiefs looked only to their own individual interests. The only exception was in the case of Ranjit Singh who regarded the problem of foreign invasion from national point of view. In his opinion successful penetration of the invader was disgraceful to all Indians in general and to the Sikhs in particular, as they controlled the north-west frontier.

Ranjit Singh thought of inviting assistance from Daulat Rao Sindhia who was the most prominent chief in northern India. It was a clever trick of diplomacy on the part of an orphan lad of fifteen surrounded on all sides by intrigue and treachery. In order to put pressure upon Sindhia he also wrote to Shah Nizam-ud-din of Delhi, a staunch friend of the Maratha Chief. But nothing came out of these negotiations.

Capture of Rohtas

Shah Zaman crossed river Indus at Attock by a bridge of boats (Jisr bastah) and reached Hasan Abdal, 127 kms from Peshawar, in three marches. He set up his headquarter there, and detached a strong contingent of troops under Ahmad Khan Shahanchi bashi to seize the fort of Rohtas 170 kms away. The Sikhs had receded before him, and had come to no conflict so far with Shah Zaman. Rohtas was the only outpost held by Ranjit Singh's men. This chief was playing his game cleverly, and avoided an open conflict with the Afghan forces. At his bidding the Sikh garrison took to flight and Rohtas fell into the hands of the Durrani army.[1] The General "was joined by the Ghakkars, the Jats and other Panjab Mussalman tribes."[2]

The Sikhs lay encamped at Pind Dadan Khan, where they were attacked by the Afghans. After a little fighting the Sikhs crossed the Jehlam, and gathered again in a large number on the southern bank of the river. Another body of the Sikhs assembled at Wazirabad on the Chenab. The people were taking to flight from the plains situated on the route of the invader ; and the means of conveyance were in

[1]It was on 23 January, 1796, that the news of the fall of Rohtas reached Delhi. *Delhi Chronicle*, 434 ; Akhbarat British Museum, r. 4608, folios 200a-b, 201b.

[2]Latif, *Panjab*, 301.

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such a great demand that in Amritsar a bullock cart was not available even for one hundred rupees.[1]" The Sikhs escorted the public safely to hills and other places of security.

Retreat to Afghanistan

Shah Zaman had stayed at Hasan Abdal only for a week, when his attention was drawn to an insurrection raised by Mahmud at Herat. It was also reported that Agha Muhammad Khan Kajar, the King of Iran, had invaded the western part of Afghanistan at the instigation of Mahmud.

This alarmed Shah Zaman greatly and he at once decided to give up his Indian campaign. He retreated so speedily that he reached Peshawar in two marches on 3 January, 1796.

Ahmad Khan Shahanchibāshi was ordered to stay at Rohtas. He despatched Bahadur Khan son of Faiz Ali Khan Shankarwala at the head of 12,000 horse to conquer Gujrat. Sahib Singh came out to oppose him. In the course of fighting a ball struck Bahadur Khan and killed him. The Afghans were defeated, and many of them were slain. Just then Ranjit Singh came to Gujrat. Both the sardars advanced to recover Rohtas. No sooner did they reach the banks of river Jehlam than Shahanchibāshi left Rohtas, and fled away to Peshawar. Rohtas, Pothohar and Gheba country fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh.

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[1]equal to about Rs. 5,000 of today.

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Shah Zaman's Third Invasion, 1796-1797

Afghan messengers in India, July, 1796

The first two invasions of Shah Zaman had proved abortive; but he did not relinquish his designs for a further invasion of India. As a matter of fact the conquest and riches of this country had the most predominating influence on his mind. He never got rid of the luring picture of becoming a conqueror of India until he lost his kingdom.

Shortly after his return to Kabul Shah Zaman sent his agents to India to win over some of the Indian princes of note to co-operate with him in vanquishing the Sikhs, who stood as a great barrier between him and the rich Ganga plain.

One of his emissaries arrived at Delhi probably in July, 1796, waited upon Shah Alam and presented his credentials. He then delivered the Shah's letter to Daulat Rao Sindhia[1] in which the Afghan monarch professed great friendship for the Marathas, promising not to disturb his administration of the Mughal Empire, and declaring that his conquests would be confined to the territories of the Sikhs.

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Negotiations with the Sikhs

Shah Zaman opened negotiations with the Sikhs also. He sent a special messenger to the Sikh sardars asking them not to molest his troops and impede his progress to Delhi in their own interest for the safety of life, honour and property. The Sikh sardars expressed their willingness to allow him a safe passage through the Panjab on the condition of the Shah's promising to part with "a large portion of plunder" which he would bring from Delhi. Another messenger visited Ranjit Singh demanding from him presents for the Afghan monarch and an undertaking to help the Shah in passing through his country. Ranjit Singh replied that his presents would be delivered to the invader in the field of battle.

Preparations at home

It was about the middle of the year 1796 that Shah Zaman com-

[1]William Palmer, British Resident at Sindhia's Court met this ambassador. On this occasion Palmer learnt that two Sayyids disguised as beggars brought a letter from Tipu Sultan in the hollow of a bamboo stick and delivered it to the Shah's agent.

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menced preparations for the invasion. His only fear that could disturb his plans was an internal commotion, and the weakest spot in his dominions was Herat where his step-brother Mahmud was the ruler. He therefore sent his real brother Shuja-ul-Mulk and his chief minister Sher Muhammad Khan to Herat in August, 1796, to reconcile Mahmud. Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi was despatched to Peshawar to collect troops. A special messenger went to Amir Mahmud, son of Nasir Khan of Baluchistan, to recruit troops. Another agent visited Kandhar, whilst some messengers went to Derajat, Multan and Bahawalpur. Instructions were issued to Mir Fatah Ali, the governor of Sind, to be ready with 10,000 horse and foot to join the Shah.

No difficulty was experienced in collecting troops. Shaikh Rahim Ali, the British intelligencer, sent to Kabul, wrote that "the sepoys of this country are ready to march towards Hind without pay merely on the chance of plunder." But the Afghans were afraid of the Sikhs; and they required assurance for their proper protection while passing across the Panjab.

By September troops began to pour into Kabul from all parts of his dominions. The total strength of the Durrani army was computed at about 80,000 horse and foot, sixty-three pieces of cannon and 700 pieces of camel artillery.[1]

Objectives of the invasion

Shah Zaman had several objectives in view in undertaking this expedition on such a grand scale. He wanted to win the glory of rescuing the Mughal Empire from the domination of the Marathas.[2] He wished to retain his overlordship of the Panjab. He was prepared to leave the province with the Sikhs if they could agree to pay him tribute. He desired to replenish his exhausted treasury. Lastly, he intended to marry the daughter of Prince Akbar Shah whom he wanted to be acknowledged the successor to Shah Alam II.

[1]The camel artillery called zamburaks were long swivels of one or two pounds ball. Two of them were carried on the back of a camel. When they were to be brought into play, the camel was made to kneel on the ground, and to prevent his rising, each leg was fastened, bent as it was, with a cord.

[2]Shah Zaman on one occasion used the following expressions regarding the Marathas

'The Empire of India is in a very ruinous condition owing to its occupation by the infidels.' Akhbarat British Museum, Or 4609, folio 125b.

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The policy of the Governor-General

It would not be out of place here to review the position of various notable political powers of northern India with regard to their policy towards the invader. As the news of the impending Durrani invasion was assuming more alarming appearance, the anxiety of some of the Indian powers was growing greater. The Governor-General knew that Shah Zaman would not be able to approach Delhi until he broke the power of the Sikhs, which task was almost beyond his power. The Governor-General recorded his opinion thus :

"The Sikhs though divided are numerous, and if unequal from disunion to oppose a large army of the Abdalis, are warlike. A sense of common danger ought naturally to produce a union amongst them, and consequently a formidable opposition to the progress of Zaman Shah, which it was highly probable, and would occupy his arms for at least a season, and obviate all apprehension that he would be able to advance beyond the Panjab."

The Governor-General's only fear was that the Shah might negotiate with the Sikh chiefs for an unmolested passage through their country. To meet such emergency he issued instructions to the Resident at Lucknow to request the Nawab of Oudh to assemble an effective body of troops to join the English army, and carefully to watch the conduct of the Rohilla chief of Rampur who might help the invader, his Afghan brother. Almas Ali Khan was ordered to hold himself in readiness with the troops under his command. Lieutenant-Colonel Palmer, Resident with Sindhia, was instructed to press the Maratha chief to keep his forces ready to march ; while the Governor-General wrote to Daulat Rao Sindhia to go to Delhi to concert with the British officers the means of defence.

By way of further precaution the Bengal armies were ordered to assemble near Kanauj. The regiment of native cavalry under Colonel Bruce was directed to march to Jaunpur. The commanding officer at Kanpur was instructed to hold a battalion of native infantry in readiness to proceed to Lucknow.

The position of Marathas

The Marathas though the strongest power in India were disunited, and were incapable of fighting against the invader. The Governor-General expressed his opinion thus : "The name of Zaman Shah has ever been an object of terror to the Marathas." Further on he

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stated : "Considering the habitual apprehensions entertained by the Marathas of Zaman Shah, and the situation of Sindhia's generals and of their chief at Poona, I am not surprised at the alarm expressed by the Maratha generals at the report of Zaman Shah's intended invasion of Hindostan."

On 10 January, 1797, Jagga Baba, a Maratha chief, wrote to Palmer against the latter's suggestion of defending one's own frontiers individually. He offered to act in concert with the English, suggesting that they should take their position on the Jamuna beyond Delhi, and thus bar the path of the invader.

Attitude of the Muslims

The Muslim population of India hailed Shah Zaman with wild enthusiasm. Latif says: "The Mahomedans looked upon him, as the champion of their faith, and the deliverer of their country. The leading Mahomedans of the Panjab, Jalal Bhatti, Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur and others joined him ; but the advance of the Durrani army, and the occupation of the capital of the Panjab by the grandson of the famous Abdali king, Ahmad Shah, caused a profound sensation throughout India, however ill-prepared the Shah and ill-designed and inopportune his plans may have been. Encouragements were held out to the Shah by a refugee prince of Delhi and Tippu Sultan. . . .Intrigues were set on foot in many parts of India to assist the king, with the object of eventually restoring the house of Tymur to power. The weakness of the Mahrattas, and the distracted state of the Nawab Wazir's country of Oudh, induced every able-bodied Mahomedan in Hindostan to arm in defence of his religion and country. The Rohilas, too, were armed cap-a-pie, and determined to assist the Shah in his endeavours to conquer India, while even in the Dakkan the advent of the royal hero was hopefully and anxiously waited by every Mahomedan."[1]

J. Lumsden, Resident at Lucknow, in a despatch of 16 October, 1796, stated his opinion thus : "It is I fear very certain that if any disturbances should happen in Hindostan in consequence of the threatened invasion of Zaman Shah, little dependence could be placed on the fidelity of the Rohillas in general either to the Vizier or to the Company. On the contrary they would probably be stimulated by past connection and by ambitious views to join the Shah's stand-

[1] *History of the Panjab*, p. 302.

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ard whenever opportunity offered ; but the event of the two wars in which they have been engaged with the Nabob and the Company have so depressed them that I do not believe any of the tribe, the Begum (widow of Zabita Khan) excepted, are possessed of affording pecuniary assistance to any hostile power."

Situation of the Sikhs

The situation of the Sikhs in the face of such a grave danger was not encouraging. The Cis-Satluj Sikhs, headed by the Raja of Patiala, were not only indifferent to their brethren of the Majha but were in favour of the invader. J. Lumsden, Resident at Lucknow, in a despatch of 27 December, 1796, to the Governor-General expressed his view thus : "Sahib Singh, the Patiala Sardar, seems to be disposed to unite his interests with those of the Shah, and I understand that this man, although a considerable zamindar in the Panjab country is not in reality a Sikh, but has been long at enmity with the principal sardars of that Tribe and is in the habit of maintaining friendly correspondence with the Ministers of Zaman Shah and his father. Situated as he is, however, in the centre of the country of the Sikhs, it is not likely that he will give the Afghans any active aid."

Among the Trans-Satluj Sikhs Ranjit Singh was definitely determined to oppose the invader. A report stated that Ranjit Singh paid twenty rupees a day to Diwan Lakhpat Rae for managing his household and estates ; while he spent his time, "in hunting and enjoying performances of dancing girls." It is also expected that the other Sikh chiefs would join him. As early as August, 1796, they took up their position at their headquarters. The farthest outpost on the north-west was held by Ram Singh at Sarae Kali, Milkha Singh was at Rawalpindi, Mohar Singh at Rohtas, Sahib Singh at Gujrat, Dal Singh at Ahmadabad, Ranjit Singh at Rasulnagar, Lahna Singh in Lahore and Gulab Singh at Amritsar. The news of Shah Zaman's approach spread a panic in the Panjab, and rich people sent their families to the hills of Jammu, Nurpur, Basohli, Haripur and Kangra.

Policy of conciliation

On this occasion Shah Zaman decided not to molest the people of the Panjab and to conciliate the Sikhs as far as possible. He was still in Kabul when certain messengers from Amritsar were arrested

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and produced before him ; but he inflicted no punishment upon them, and set them free.

He was also not going to permit his troops to plunder the people indiscriminately. With this object in view he paid the soldiers Rs. 3 per head for their expenses from Kabul to Attock. As a matter of fact, he was humane and tender-hearted. A Persian newsletter, dated Kabul, 2 August, 1796, states : "The justice and impartiality of this King are so great that nobody can wrong another. The Muslim priests have no courage to molest the Hindus who have their houses near mosques and sound conches."

At Peshawar

Shah Zaman left Kabul on 12 October, 1796. He halted at Peshawar for about a month. Here he opened negotiations with the Sikh chiefs and wrote to them : "If you are anxious for your welfare, honour and security, you will be obedient to my commands and offer no impediment to the march of my troops, and if you do you will be trampled under foot by my cavalry." At this Raja Ranjit Singh advanced to the banks of the Jehlam with 10,000 horse.[1]

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On the Indus

Shah Zaman left Peshawar on 26 November, 1796, and reached the Indus opposite Attock. From here he despatched a contingent of 5,000 horse to the Derajat to collect men and money ; while Mir Fatah Ali Khan was ordered to attend him with 10,000 troops.

When the bridge on the Indus was in preparation, four chiefs, Asad Khan, Ahmad Khan, Mir Afzal Khan and Dilasa Khan, were despatched across the river to scout for intelligence. They advanced to some distance, plundered and set fire to a few villages, and then returned to the camp.

On the completion of the bridge the advance-guard numbering 12,000 was placed under Sher Muhammad Khan, Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi and Bahadur Khan. One half of it under Sher Muhammad's son advanced towards Hasan Abdal and came into conflict with Milkha Singh. The engagement lasted for a few hours, resulting in the death of about fifty men on both sides. The Durrani

[1]Ranjit Singh though only sixteen, was known at this time by the title of Raja, a distinction which he enjoyed over all other Sikh chiefs of the Trans-Satluj country.

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troops plundered two or three villages of the Sikhs, and fell back. Milkha Singh also receded to Rohtas.

Skirmishes with the Sikhs

At Attock, Shah Zaman divided his army into seven divisions, each roughly consisting of about twelve thousand men. By sending them on different roads he endeavoured to surprise the rear of the Sikhs ; "but being unsuccessful, had again united his forces."

On 19 December news arrived at Lahore that Shah Zaman was staying at Hasan Abdal. His advance-guard under several commanders of note as such Wazir Sher Muhammad Khan, Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi, Nur Muhammad Khan and Payendah Khan, marched towards Jehlam. Ranjit Singh who had already vacated Rohtas retired to Pind Dadan Khan. A division of the Afghan army came into conflict with him, and drove him across the river. Ranjit Singh took up his position at Miani where he was joined by Milkha Singh. Sahib Singh of Gujrat was also there. By another ford Ranjit Singh quietly crossed the Jehlam, made a surprise attack on the Durrani contingent at Pind Dadan Khan, and immediately recrossed the river.

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From Sarae Pakka Shah Zaman addressed a letter to Ranjit Singh asking him not to obstruct his progress. The Sikh chief replied that he was ready to fight as "through the grace of Guru every Sikh was bound to be victorious." At this the Durrani advance-guard crossed the Jehlam, and encamped at Kharian. The Sikh chiefs crossed the Chenab, and began to collect troops on the southern bank of the river.

Offer of the Mughal Emperor

The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II greatly rejoiced at Shah Zaman's advance into the Panjab. He sent messengers to wait upon the Shah with the offer of paying him Rs. 50,000 for every march and Rs. 25,000 for a halt.

Mirza Ahsan Bakht was at this time at Multan. He lived in a garden outside the city, received an allowance of Rs. 30 per day from the Governor, and led a "bad and debauched life."

Attempt at pacification

At Rohtas, Shah Zaman issued orders that none of his troops should seize money and property of the people and should do no

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wrong to them. They could take possession of grass and fuel just sufficient to meet their requirements.

A zamindar waited upon the Wazir who lay encamped at Gujrat, and told him that the inhabitants were in consternation. The Wazir replied that there was no cause for alarm assuring him that the Shah "came to render the country more populous and not to lay it waste." He promulgated orders to his soldiers of the vanguard not to molest anyone.

Three or four Sikhs who had been taken prisoners and sent to Shah Zaman were released by him. The Shah observed that only those who appeared to be enemies should be arrested.

Lahna Singh had always been the most popular Sikh chief with his subjects, particularly with the Muslims, and whenever there was an invasion, the Musalmans always recommended him to the Durrani monarch for good treatment. On this occasion Shah Zaman sent messengers to Lahna Singh assuring him of the royal favour and retention in the governorship of Lahore, and advising him to shake off his apprehensions. Lahna Singh thanked the Shah for his kindness and regard ; but declined submission on account of hostile attitude of his comrades.

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Capture of Lahore

Leaving Nasir Khan at Rohtas at the head of a considerable body of horse and Nasirullah Khan in Gujrat, Shah Zaman reached Eminabad on 29 December, 1796. But as the Shah was advancing towards Lahore, some Sikhs were gathering in his rear and expelling his thanadars from various military posts established by him particularly in the territory lying between the Jehlam and the Chenab.

Lahna Singh had already permitted most of the residents of Lahore and Shahdara to retire to any place of safety. At this time he sent for the Muslim leaders of note and offered them to take charge of the city ; "but was persuaded by their entreaties to stay two days more." Later on he summoned Mian Chiragh-ud-din Shah Sultanpuri, a descendant of Sayyid Muhai-ud-din Jilani, Mir Ghalib Shah, Mian Muhammad Ashiq and other Muslim leaders, and "without manifesting any partiality for the Hindoos" made over the city to their charge. He told them that he was leaving the fort in good repair without any damage done to it, and requested them to use their influence with the Shah to secure lenient treatment to the people. Afterwards he got

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into a palanquin, and accompanied by 100 horse, one field piece and an elephant halted at the fort of Haji Saeed Khan.

On 31 December, 1796, Sher Muhammad Khan Wazir at the head of 12,000 troops entered Lahore. The leading Muslim chiefs delivered the keys of the fort to him. Just then arrived a letter from Shah Zaman for Lahna Singh promising him all concessions and favours. Another messenger brought a proclamation from the Shah prohibiting the Afghan soldiers from committing any outrage on the inhabitants of the city. It was also declared that if any Afghan officer wanted to live inside the city, he could rent a house with the consent of the proprietor. Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi and the city Kotwal proclaimed security of life and property and in consequence the shops which had been shut were reopened.

Such were the strict orders of Shah Zaman that an intelligencer from Lahore stated that "no outrage has been committed upon any individual during the Shah's progress from Peshawar to Lahore", declaring that his troops "put to death all the Sikhs who appear in arms against them, but spare the rest."

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Shah Zaman entered Lahore on January, 1797, and the people greeted him by showering flowers of silver upon him. The 26-year-old youthful warrior wearing a black tall sheep-skin cap, riding upon a prancing steed on the plain below the walls of the fort of Lahore, and giving short and strict orders deeply impressed the people of the capital.

On 2 January he made his appearance in the Diwan-e-Khas, where he was attended by Yusaf Ali Khan Nazir, Sher Muhammad Khan, Rahmatullah Khan, Payendah Khan, Kifayat Khan, Mulla Ghafar Khan and others. Upon inquiry the Shah was informed that about 5,000 Sikhs were assembled at Amritsar. The Shah addressed letters to the Sikh chiefs to wait upon him. The Raja of Patiala, "Sahib Singh caused an 'arzi to be drawn up expressive of his perfect submission and sent it to Ghulam Ahmad Khan, newswriter with directions to proceed to the Shah's camp to represent his (Sahib Singh's) sentiments and inform His Majesty that he was ready to attend him whithersoever he might please to appoint him."

Shah Zaman took his seat on the movable throne (Takht-e-hawādār), visited the defences of the city, and ordered for sundry repairs, particularly in the sleeping apartment, prayer room, Saman Burj and Naulakha Bungalow. He ordered to station his own personal troops in the Shalamar Garden. Shah Zaman ordered that nobody should

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oppress the people of Lahore, and that the culprit would be punished by having his belly torn out. "Some Durranis who had oppressed the inhabitants had their noses cut off and were led about as a public spectacle."[1]

In the afternoon, having enjoyed siesta he held a court in the Naulakha Bungalow. Sher Muhammad Wazir presented petitions from the Afghan ruler of Kasur and the Muslim zamindar of Kapurthala signifying their submission. The latter further represented that if the Shah would depute to him a contingent of 12,000, he would supersede the Sikh authority in that district. The Shah ordered a letter to be addressed to the Raja of Jammu.

It was reported to the Shah that the shopkeepers of the city both Hindu and Muslim had failed in illuminating their houses and shops, and the town was converted from a place of merriment into an abode of sorrow (mātam kadah). The Shah ordered that a poll tax should be charged from all. On representations the Muslims were exempted from its payment. The Durrani soldiers sat at the door of every Hindu house, and under blows and whips extorted money from them. The poll tax was realized three times.[2] "Some Hindus drowned themselves in wells,"[3] and "it caused sufferings, restlessness and confusion in the whole city of Lahore." On having realised the poll tax, the Shah awarded robes of honour to eleven *chaudhris*, and struck his own coins.

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March against the Sikhs postponed

In the morning of 5 January Shah Zaman held a durbar in the Diwan-e-Am, where he granted public interviews to important persons. At about 9 O'clock messengers brought news that several Sikh chiefs including Baghel Singh, Tara Singh, Sahib Singh and Karam Singh were approaching Amritsar to join Gulab Singh. Shah Zaman at once dispersed the courtiers, and immediately marched towards Amritsar. When he reached the Shalamar Garden, another pair of messengers announced that the Sikhs had fled away from Amritsar after performing some religious ceremonies. They also reported that "throughout this country such a terror has the Shah's army diffused

[1] *NAI*, Secret Department, 25th January, 1797, no. 6, p. 161.
[2] Imam-ud-din Husaini who was then present in Lahore writes:
Az mardam-e-Hanūd bazarb-o-shalaq seh bār jazia bawasūl āmad.
Husain Shahi, 197.
[3] Sohan Lal, II, 33.

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that in towns and villages lately populous now not a man is to be seen," and that "all the inhabitants between Patiala and Lahore are fled to the hills".

The Shah amused himself in the Garden till noon, and then returned to the fort by the Masti Gate. In the afternoon he issued a proclamation ordering the shopkeepers to open their shops, and forbidding his men from keeping dancing girls. In the evening Sher Muhammad Khan Wazir wrote to the Sikh chiefs that if they desired peace they should attend upon the Shah, else they would be punished by the imperial army.

On 7 January Shah Zaman held court in the Diwan-e-Khas, where he was attended by his notable chiefs and Prince Shuja-ul-Mulk, real brother of the Shah. The Shah ordered for building a bridge on the Ravi to facilitate the passage of troops who were frequently passing across the river. In the afternoon he went to the Badshahi Mosque to offer Friday prayers. On this occasion it was represented to him that Nawab Imam Bakhsh Khan who had been appointed the Governor of Lahore demanded tribute from the people. The Shah forbade him to do so.

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Just then news was brought that some Sikh chiefs were assembling their troops at Haran Manarah (Shaikhupura), but the Shah did not think it proper to lead an expedition against them.

Shah Zaman defeated at Amritsar

On 11 January a light cavalry detachment of the Durrani army raided Amritsar. A body of Sikhs who were there readily engaged themselves in a skirmish. In a hand-to-hand fight with sword and spear, the Durranis were repulsed and the Sikhs pursued them to a great distance.

The Shah was greatly offended on hearing this, and he led the major portion of his army to Amritsar. The Sikhs also gathered in a large body numbering about fifty thousand. A desperate battle was the result. It commenced at 8 O'clock in the morning on 12 January. Shah Zaman opened intense fire from the camel artillery, while the Sikhs used their matchlocks only. The fight continued unabated till 2 O'clock. About this time the Sikhs realized that they had made no

[1]The following rates per rupee of some articles prevailed in Lahore on that day.

Wheat 17 kg, barley 20 kg, ghī 2 kg, and oil 4 kg.

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impression on the enemy. They gave a signal for a general charge, "and agreeable to their mode in close combat, flung away their turbans, let loose their hair, put their beards in their mouths, and dashed into the midst of the Abdallah (Abdali) army with sword in hand." Both the armies thus continued for nearly four hours, when the Durrani army gave way. They "were pursued by the Seikhs to the very entrance of Lahore."

The losses on both sides were great, though the number given below appears exaggerated. "It is mentioned that 35,000 men were killed in this engagement, 20,000 on the part of the Shah, and 15,000 of the Seikhs."

The Sikhs closely watched Amritsar. It was reported that about 7,000 well mounted (khush aspah) horsemen and 10,000 Akal Bungia infantry remained armed in the fort. An entry in the *Delhi Chronicle*, 438, records that on 12 January, 1797, Sher Muhammad Khan Wazir and two other Durrani chiefs plundered one street of Lahore and killed several persons. This might be due to the non-co-operation of the people of Lahore with the Durranis in the bloody battle of Amritsar.

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Retreat of a Durrani contingent

Shah Zaman arrived at Lahore in the night, and early next morning (13 January) he directed his attention to repairing the fort and manufacturing arms, ammunition and 500 guns. All the factories and workshops in the city were set to work at their full capacity. At the same time instructions were issued to Muzaffar Khan, the governor of Multan, to attend him with 10,000 horse, 2,000 camels and some money. Bahawal Khan, the chief of Bahawalpur, Mir Fatah Ali Khan, the governor of Sind, and the chiefs of Kasur were summoned to Lahore.

The Sikh chiefs hovered about Amritsar. Ranjit Singh at the head of 9,000 troops was stationed a few kms north of Amritsar. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was at Sri Hargobindpur, Gulab Singh Bhangi was at a distance of 30 kms. Lahna Singh was on the other side of the Beas.

On 15 January Shah Zaman marshalled his army within the walls of the city. The Shah realized the necessity of seeking co-operation of the people in fighting the Sikhs, and he strictly prohibited his troops from molesting them. A report of that day stated that "the Shah's army though hungry were not using much violence against the

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people of the country." A contingent of the Durrani army was sent towards Amritsar to scout for intelligence. They had not gone far on the main road when they were attacked by a body of Sikhs. In the action about 300 men were killed and wounded on either side. The Shah's troops immediately retired to Lahore.

Attitude of Indian powers

In the fierce contest between Shah Zaman and the Taruna Dal Sikhs, the attitude of all other Indian powers was deplorable. There was no national feeling in the country, and political life appeared completely extinct. The Budha Dal and Phulkian Sikhs were not prepared to co-operate with their brethren of the Trans-Satluj. No help came from the ruling families of Kapurthala, Patiala, Nabha and Jind. On the following day after the bloody battle at Amritsar (13 January) Ranjit Singh wrote to Sahib Singh of Patiala to join them against the invader. He never sent any reply to this letter, but on receiving it remarked: "I am a zamindar. I cannot do without meeting the Shah." The Maratha chiefs were in the Deccan, and no activity was displayed by them in the north. The Rajput Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur were preparing to throw off their allegiance to the Marathas, whilst the Raja of Jainagar was openly welcoming Shah Zaman. Thus there was absolutely no unity among the Hindu powers and princes, and the Trans-Satluj Sikhs alone were left to fight the country's war. How shameful !

The Emperor Shah Alam II and his son Akbar Shah solicited Shah Zaman to send a part of his forces under the charge of the former minister Ghazi-ud din Khan in order to expel the Marathas from Delhi and re-establish the Mughal authority. They renewed their old offer of paying the Shah Rs. 50,000 for every march and Rs. 25,000 for every half on the condition of the Shah's personally coming to Delhi. The Shah despatched six messengers to Delhi to study the political situation there, and two of them were directed to visit Lucknow in the disguise of beggars.

The Governor-General was very much perturbed at the news of the battle of Amritsar on 12 January, 1797. He took precautionary measures in the interest of the English, and the dominion of Oudh. He ordered troops at Kanpur to move to Kanauj and directed a regiment of native infantry to march to Allahabad from Chunar, and a battalion to proceed to the latter place from Dinapore. At the same time instructions were issued to the Resident at Lucknow to request the

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Nawab to assemble his troops at Kanauj, to post a flying column in Rohilkhand, to enlist as many of the Rampur Rohillas as possible, to put the fort of Allahabad under a British officer, to procure supplies for the troops, and to store a large quantity of provisions at Allahabad. A strong force was stationed at Anupshahar to defend the frontier of Oudh.

Encounters between the Durranis and the Sikhs

The Sikhs were carrying on their work of harassing Shah Zaman by cutting off his supplies and destroying his messengers. A newsletter from Patiala of 17 January, 1797, stated that the Sikh horsemen infested the roads leading from Lahore to Patiala, and they seized and carried off all the *dāk harkaras* bringing news from Lahore.

On 19 January news arrived at Patiala that a large number of Bairagis with their property were going to the hills. A contingent of the Shah attacked them. Just then a body of the Sikhs arrived on the scene, joined the Bairagis and fought with the Afghans. In the engagement many were killed and wounded. The Durranis afterwards returned to the camp.

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It was reported to the Shah that a certain detachment of Sikhs was assembling towards Chunian and Pakpattan. Nizam-ud-din Khan, the Afghan chief of Kasur, who possessed intimate knowledge of this part of the country was given charge of an expedition against them. This chief was terribly afraid of the Sikhs, and was not prepared to offend them for fear of retribution after the Shah's withdrawal. He therefore "gave wrong information from patriotic motives, and took care to avoid coming in contact with the intended victims."

About this time intelligence was brought to Shah Zaman that nearly three thousand Sikhs were lying encamped near Shaikhupura 25 kms west of Lahore. The Shah at once despatched Sher Muhammad Khan at the head of a strong force equipped with a few pieces of artillery. Mulla Abdul Ghafar Khan, a converted Sikh leader, a resident of Shaikhupura, who was then in Shah's service and in favour with the Wazir, requested Sher Muhammad Khan not to punish the Sikhs of that place promising that he would make them tributary to the Shah. The Mulla collected some money and paid it to the Wazir, and thus saved his town from ruin.

Shah Zaman decides to retreat

Shah Zaman was facing two difficulties at this time. In the first

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place the Sikhs were carrying on depredations on all sides of the Shah's camp, and were successfully cutting off his supplies. Ranjit Singh took the largest part in this business. 'About this period the famous Ranjeet Singh brought himself into notice by his bold irruptions', says Shaharnat Ali.[1] He had at this time a party of eight or nine hundred horse under his command, and carried on depredations around the royal camp with remarkable impunity. Such was the negligence and idleness of the King's army that no one could arrest his movement. In certain places they were removing his outposts. In the second place his own troops were discontented as they were not allowed to plunder and punish the people of this country.

These two obstacles delayed his departure to Delhi. There is no doubt that if Shah Zaman had advanced from Lahore he would have reached the imperial capital. The Trans-Satluj Sikhs would not have gone far in pursuit of the Shah away from their homes. Sahib Singh of Patiala and several others would have submitted and assisted him in his advance. The Marathas were not prepared to impede his progress. They might have molested his retreat, but they could not have checked his entrance into Delhi. The English were ready to oppose him if he had tried to march beyond the imperial capital towards Oudh.

Shah Zaman, however, was not destined to see this great city of his dreams. He was still formulating his plans to tackle the Sikh menace when he received the news of disturbances created by his brother Mahmud in Herat. Finding his throne in jeopardy he decided to retreat. Circumstances are stronger than man.

Return journey

Shah Zaman's disappointment must have been great when he thought of this expedition being so barren and fruitless. It was only out of despair that "he levied a contribution from the inhabitants of Lahore," and in the course of collection naturally "great excesses were committed by his troops." The total sum of money collected from Lahore alone amounted to twenty-two lakhs.

The Shah crossed the Ravi by a bridge of boats on 30 January, 1797. He halted at Shahdara till the morning of 2 February. He was at Wazirabad on 3 February. At Jehlam where he stopped for three days, he appointed Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi his governor

[1] p. 94.

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of Rohtas and the country lying between rivers Jehlam and the Indus. No troops were left to the east of the Jehlam and no chief was nominated to rule over this part of the country. Ahmad Khan was provided with 7,000 troops, 100 pieces of camel artillery, four guns and two lakhs of rupees. Several assistants were given to him to maintain his position against the Sikhs. Bahadur Khan Muhammadzai with 500 horse, Bostan Khan Durrani with 1,000 horse, Nurullah Khan Khattak with 500 horse, Bangash Kohati with 300 horse, a Yusafzai chief with 200 horse and Hasan Khan Qizalbash with 4,000 horse were left behind to co-operate with the Shahanchibashi.

Being just and equitable by temperament the Shah was greatly offended to find that Rahmatullah Khan (the following year raised to the position of prime minister), and two other chiefs had oppressed the people and done injustice to their troops. They were ordered to be bound hand and foot and publicly flogged.

Shah Zaman reached Peshawar on 25 February and left it on 1 March. While passing through the Khaibar Pass his rear-guard was attacked by tribesmen, who carried off some clothes and camels, and disappeared in caves and hills. His troops pursued them, killed some, and brought many prisoners. Eighteen principal men of the Pass were taken to Kabul and confined there. The Khaibar road was closed for a time. Islam Khan Mohmand and Husain Khan Qizalbash were ordered to punish the Khaibaris. Shah Zaman arrived at Kabul on 17 March, 1797.

Comment

If the subjugation of the Panjab be assigned as the object of Shah Zaman's expedition, it may be remarked that he prosecuted this design without vigour and relinquished it with precipitation. As regards the Sikhs they made no concerted preparation to cause him alarm or to occasion his hasty retreat. On the contrary owing to dissensions prevailing among them, the Shah could expect the co-operation of some of them. A Government report states : "It was natural to suppose that a sense of common danger would have roused the Sikhs into a union for their mutual defence ; but their habitual jealousies and distrusts, the sources of perpetual dissensions and hostilities among them prevented it."

Among the Muslim chiefs Rohillas were the only people who displayed some activity to take advantage of the Shah's presence in the Panjab. Bhambu Khan, the brother of Ghulam Qadir Khan

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Rohilla, came to Buriya Ghat on the Jamuna at the head of a considerable force. He pretended having received orders from Shah Zaman, and invited the Rohilla chiefs of Rampur and other places to join him. He was restrained in his aggressive designs by Bapuji Sindhia, "a very active and spirited officer" of Saharanpur. A Government report stated :

"We are sufficiently apprized of the disposition of the Rohillas to be assured that they would seize the first opportunity for rebellion and that they would have considered the arrival of Zaman Shah at Delhi as furnishing it. The Pathans in the district of Farrukhabad, the less independent, are equally disposed to disaffection and plunder, and nothing but the protection of the Company's arms would have prevented the greatest disorders in the Vizir's Dominions, if Zeman Shah had approached them."

The sudden departure of Shah Zaman must have caused disappointment to all those who had built hopes of realizing their own selfish ends through his assistance. But the Sikhs, the Marathas and the English were happy at the unexpected termination of the invader's activities. On the retirement of Shah Zaman Rae Singh Bhangi and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia communicated this news to the Governor-General.

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Rae Singh's letter

"The disturbance that reigns in this quarter (meaning Shah Zaman's invasion) cannot be in any respect unknown to you. The chiefs of the Khalsa Jiu repaired to places of security on account of their families, and everyone of them is bent upon repelling this disturbance, and being now at ease with regard to their families will take measures for that purpose. Your well-wisher with his brethren and chiefs is in the fort of Buriya Parganah. They (meaning the invaders) have no knowledge of Gurmata which is *Salah-i-Govind* (consultation with Guru Govind Singh). Akalpurkh's *Sewaks* (servants of God) did before expel the Devoted Body (meaning the Abdalis) from this country, and overwhelmed them. They will now do the same. I hope that you will do me the honour to communicate your sentiments, and that you will believe me at all times attached to you, and that I shall fulfil all the obligations of adherence at their due season."

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Jassa Singh's letter

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia stated : "Since the time that I heard the great and praiseworthy qualities that the English are celebrated for among all ranks of people, it was my design to have set on foot a friendly intercourse by letters with Mr. Lumsden ; but the news of your arrival (at Lucknow) has afforded me extreme satisfaction. (Here follow verses of compliment.) A man of wisdom has the qualities of a scimitar that nothing can resist. Lately the Afghans, framing empty schemes of ambition in their minds, repaired towards Hindostan and reached Lahore. Although those young upstarts not knowing when they were well did not endeavour to maintain their footing, yet upon the principle (expressed in these lines)—'Be not too sure that the forest is empty, perhaps a tiger may be couched in it'—immediately on this event the Khalsa Jiu prepared to oppose them ; and no sooner had the Prince of Kabul himself but a youth, arrived at Lahore than believing himself devoted to destruction if he stayed, he immediately retreated. If a system of mutual co-operation were adopted, it is certain that his expulsion would not require any great exertion of our joint endeavours. All these points will be further made known to you by the representations of Rao Ghasi Singh. I request you will communicate to me what your inclinations may suggest" (The language of some portion of this translation in the original is not very clear.)

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The Governor-General's replies

"To Jassa Sing—I have had the pleasure to receive your letter (recapitulate that received, 7th April, 97)."

"What you have written on the subject of Zaman Shah is a proof of your foresight and wisdom. I learn that the Shah has been obliged to march his army towards Candahar and that there is little probability that he will be enabled to return to Lahore ; but if you should have any intelligence of a different tenor, I trust you will acquaint me with it, that whatever prudence may suggest may be performed."

"To Roy Sing—I have received your letter (vide that received 18th February, 1797), and was much gratified by your expressions of attachment.

"Being on my journey to Lucknow and to the present time much occupied in business and having also heard of the retreat of Zaman Shah prior to the receipt of your letter I have delayed to reply to it

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and it is now only necessary to congratulate you on the removal of all apprehension of an invasion by him."

Defeat and death of Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi, 29 April, 1797

Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi, the Durrani governor in the Sind Sagar Doab, was stationed at Rohtas. His instructions were to seize and send to Kabul all the Sikhs who would attempt to enter his territory. On the Shah's return the Sikh chiefs were recovering their territories. Ranjit Singh was planning to capture Rohtas ; while Milkha Singh came to Gujrat with Sahib Singh to proceed to Rawalpindi shortly.

Shahanchibashi was establishing his authority in the Sind Sagar Doab. According to Bute Shah he "committed gross atrocities in the neighbourhood of Gujrat, and forcibly took to wife a Brahman girl." She belonged to village Haranpur,[1] and was known all over for her beauty and grace. He also seized a number of handsome lads and pretty girls. The ripe wheat crops were destroyed.

Hayat Khan son of Chaudhri Rahmat Khan Waraich of Jalalpur captured Islamgarh fort and raised the standard of revolt against Sahib Singh of Gujrat. Shahanchibashi made up his mind to drive away the Sikh sardars from Gujrat. Leaving his women in the fort of Rohtas under the care of Ilyas Khan, he crossed river Jehlam at the head of 12,000 cavalry. His advance-guard was in the command of Allah Yardad Khan. The main body was under his personal charge. The rear-guard was commanded by Bahadur Khan. Shahanchibashi made Islamgarh the base of his operations. His plan was to begin his campaign from Sialkot in the east, and to drive the Sikhs from Gujrat towards Jehlam, surround them on the banks of the river, and to force them to capitulate.

Bedi Ram Singh belonged to village Kotli Faqir Chand Bedian in Sialkot district. His eyebrows were white. He was tall, daring, brave, handsome and strongly built. On hearing the atrocities of Shahanchibashi he grew furious. He made up his mind to have a holy war against the Afghan tyrant. He bathed, put on a clean dress, said prayers and carried the sacred Granth on his head accompanied by two persons who waved peacock feathers over the Granth. He went from village to village inviting young men to join him in a holy war (*dharam yudh*) against Shahanchibashi with many drum beaters

[1]Haranpur lies on river Jehlam where there is a railway bridge.

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shouting, " *Āo jinhān shahīdyān pāni han.*"

Jodh Singh and Diwan Singh Bājwās Kalāswālie with about 250 men reached Kotli. Wadalia sardars also arrived.

First day's battle

Ram Singh at the head of his men advanced towards Sialkot where Shahanchi's troops were staying. Shahanchi deputed Kamil Din, Murid Khan, Asadullah and Ali Khan at the head of a strong force. Numerous young men, Hindus and Sikhs, began to join the Shahids. The first day's battle was fought at Protiān. The whole area rang with the cries of Yā Ali, Yā Ali, and Sat Sri Akal. The fighting parties moved on towards Toriān where another fierce engagement took place. The battles were fought over a tract of about 10 square kilometres. The sky was covered with thick clouds of dust. Dead bodies were lying all over. The hoofs of horses were covered with the blood of the dead. The din was making people deaf. At some places the Afghans were prevailing and at others the Sikhs were having an upper hand. By evening it remained a drawn battle. At nightfall both the parties retired to their camps. They lit fires, cooked food, and treated the wounded. The reserves kept a vigil. The fighters went to sleep.

Second day's battle

The Afghans moved their camp to river Chenab in the night. At dawn the two sides again got ready for the fight. Ram Singh was in the forefront. Behind him were Diwan Singh and Charat Singh of Kalāswala, Dharam Singh Jalalwalia, Budh Singh Dodia, Karam Singh Gill, Mahtab Singh Wadalia, Ran Singh of Sarae Kali, Jaimal Singh Kanhiya, Jodh Singh Atariwala, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, Bhag Singh Ahluwalia, Natha Singh Shahid, Nahar Singh Chamyariwala, Mansa Singh, Desa Singh, and Sham Singh of Sultanwind, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Milkha Singh Pindiwala, and many more. Trenches were dug. A tough battle was fought the whole day. Many duels took place. Both the parties fell back at dusk. Nobody had won.

Third day's battle

According to the code of war in those days no fighting was done at night. Some Sikh watchmen noticed Afghans crossing river Chenab in boats. The Sikhs also did the same. The major part of the Afghan

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army was under Shahanchibashi who was encamped at some distance from Gujrat.

Some young men went about shouting in the Sikh camp : "The Kabulis are making Panjab their home. The whole country has been ruined by them. Nobody's life, honour and property are safe. Put an end to their atrocities. Pathānān nūn Allah yād karāo."

Ram Singh and his Sikhs advanced from the western bank of river Chenab. Sahib Singh, Ranjit Singh and other Sikh sardars proceeded from the west. A savage engagement was fought 7 kms east of Gujrat. Ram Singh and Shahanchibashi were both shot dead. The Durrani troops took to flight. They were hotly pursued up to the banks of river Jehlam. In the pursuit son of Faiz Talab, governor of Peshawar and his three principal officers were killed. Nearly 3,000 Afghans and about half that number of the Sikhs were slain and wounded. A large booty consisting of camels, horses and war material fell into the hands of the Sikhs. The corpse of Shahanchibashi was treated with utmost insult and contempt. His head with the tall Afghan cap was fixed on a spearhead and was displayed in many villages and towns. The Brahman girl was recovered from his tent. She was sent to her parents who declined to accept her. She took up her abode in a temple, and was worshipped after her death as a *sati*.

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CHAPTER 22

The Last Foreign Invasion from the North-West or Shah Zaman's Fourth Invasion of India, 1798-1799

Shah Zaman invited to invade India

Such Indian Princes as were disappointed at the abrupt departure of Shah Zaman from the Panjab issued invitations to him to invade this country as soon as he was free from internal turmoils.

A news-letter of 27 May, 1797, from Kabul stated that Shah Zaman received letters from Mir Raza Ali and Mir Habibullah, the agents of Tipu. They were staying at Kandhar, and were about to leave for Kabul. They were accompanied by three hundred men. They brought presents including many fine horses all worth five lakhs of rupees. They requested the Shah to invade India, and supply Tipu 20,000 soldiers in return for three crores of rupees in addition to the expenses of the contingent asked for.

Shaikh Rahim Ali, an intelligencer sent by the English to Kabul, wrote on 29 May, 1797, that the vakils of the Rajas of Jammu and Kangra and of Bhambu Khan Rohilla waited on Shah Zaman with presents and informed him of the political situation in northern India.

On 21 June, 1797, he wrote that the Muslim chiefs of Pind Dadan Khan, Rasulnagar, Jhang, Kasur and many other places sent their vakils to Shah Zaman inviting him to invade the Panjab and expel the Sikhs from power.

About the same time Wazir Ali of Oudh sent Sayyid Zain-ul-Abidin Khan and Mir Sadiq Ali to persuade Shah Zaman to march to Oudh to restore him to the throne and expel the English.

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Afghan messengers in India

Shah Zaman wanted to verify the authenticity of these representations and sent his agent Ghulam Muhammad Khan to India. He left Kabul on 31 August, 1797, with fourteen letters from the Shah for various persons including the Governor-General and the Nawab of Oudh. At Multan he was taken ill with plague and was detained there for three months. He stayed at Jainagar for nearly two months. He reached Fatahgarh on 6 May, 1798, where he delivered the letter addressed to Sir John Shore :

"At this time the trusty Ghulam Muhammad Khan, the newswriter in Hindustan, after having the honour of paying his respects at the resplendent presence described to us the excess of your attachment and fidelity which afforded us much satisfaction and prompted further marks of our favour towards you. It is our intention to visit Hindustan and at a proper season shall accordingly set out, when we shall encourage friends and chastise enemies. We have therefore deputed now Ghulam Muhammad Khan thither to ascertain who are our friends and who are our enemies, which he will communicate accordingly. Let your mind be perfectly at ease, and continue to walk in the path of allegiance and fidelity."

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This letter was received by Marquis of Wellesley, who expressed his "entire disapprobation of the ambitious projects of Zaman Shah. Certain Government records state that the Governor-General sent his agent to Kabul to wait on Shah Zaman "with presents of the precious commodities of China and Europe, some lakhs of gold mohurs and rupees without number."

Ghulam Muhammad brought for the Nawab of Oudh a *khilat* consisting of four pieces, a turban, a close coat, a loose coat and a *kamarband.* He delivered the Shah's letter to the Nawab at Lucknow on 18 June, 1798. In it the Shah had stated about his intended invasion of India against the Sikhs and the Marathas and had sought the Nawab's assistance. This letter reads as follows :

"We have it in contemplation to go on a hunting expedition to Hindostan and to strengthen the government of the House of Timur, which is connected with us by the ties of mutual friendship and relationship. A gang of Marathas have taken possession of the country, and under the veil of friendship have been inimical to the Emperor of Hindostan, who is now in their power. How have you permitted this without regard to truth, good faith, foresight and justice ? We are about to proceed to Hindostan, and it is proper that you—the

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English Chief and the Nawab Wazir—should gird up your loins in the service of our royal self and the Emperor of Hindostan, and whenever the royal orders shall be issued, attend the victorious stirrup and prove your loyalty. Exert yourself in all things for the good of the Emperor of Hindostan.

"The Sikhs and Marathas have endeavoured to destroy the Government of the Emperors of Hindostan. Whenever they have had footing in Hindostan they have expelled the great and illustrious persons and taken possession of the country. When our army, the star of victory, shall be extirpating the Marathas and Sikhs, if either of them particularly the Marathas demand your assistance will you think it proper to be loyal and on the side of the Emperor of Hindostan or will you prefer hostility to him ?"

Ghulam Muhammad Khan also tried to enlist the support of the Government of Nepal, and sent an agent to the Raja expressing a desire that he should be permitted to stay in his territory in summer. Bun Shah, the chief of Kumaon Hills, on behalf of the Raja, sent a vakil named Tota Ram to represent to the British Resident at Lucknow that his Government had declined all the terms offered by the Afghan agent only out of regard for the Resident and the Nawab. He suggested that the Government of Nepal was prepared to secure the person of Ghulam Muhammad Khan by inviting him into their territory if the Resident so desired, and in return for this service he demanded the restoration of Kashipur and Rudarpur. But Sir John Shore had already declined in 1796 to surrender these places, and this matter therefore was not further considered.

Mir Abdul Karim, another Durrani agent, visited Sindhia's court at Fatahgarh on 9 September, 1798, and delivered the Shah's letter for Colonel Palmer to General Stuart. He told him that his master was coming to India "to extirpate the Maratha nation from Hindostan," and that he desired "to cultivate the friendship of the English." He said that the Shah hoped the English would "regard his arrival in no other light than that of the friend of the house of Timur and the foe of its enemies."[1]

Mir Sadiq Ali returned to India and reached Jainagar early in October, 1798. He brought robes of honour from Shah Zaman for the Rajas of Jainagar and Bikaner. He declared that two contingents

[1] *Sindhia's Affairs*, 1794-1799, Pares Bradshaw to the Governor-General, dated Fatahgarh, 13th September, 1798.

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of the Durrani army were to march via Bahawalpur, and sought their co-operation.[1]

Political situation in India

Although Shah Zaman had many sympathisers in India, he could not count on active support of any one. Kashmir, Peshawar, Derajat, Multan and Sind were ruled over by his own governors, while Bahawalpur owed him allegiance. But they were not in a position to do anything else except paying money by way of tribute, partly owing to their meagre resources and partly for fear of the Sikhs. The petty Muslim chieftains in the Panjab could not openly stir as the Sikhs were there to suppress them. Guru Bishambar Das of Jandiala "by name, designation and habits a Hindu, though his mother was a prostitute",[2] was another loyal servant of the Shah; but he commanded no powerful resources. The Emperor Shah Alam had no independent authority of his own. The Nawab of Oudh was dependent on the English. The Rohilla chief of Rampur was overshadowed by the Nawab of Oudh. Tipu Sultan was far in the south, and could not join the Shah without overcoming the resistance of the Marathas and the English which was beyond his power.

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The Marathas

The Marathas were on the alert this time on account of Shah Zaman's hostile attitude towards them. In September, 1798, on the Shah's approach to the Panjab the Marathas collected troops at Shergarh near Horall (Hodal) numbering a lakh with 200 pieces of cannon. Sindhia also marched from the Deccan with a strong army. Colonel Perron directed Major Pedron at Koil to raise a brigade.

The British Government

The British Government in London felt that there might be a combination among Napoleon, Shah Zaman, Marathas, the French in India and Tipu Sultan against the English in India. Their conjecture was that Napoleon might succeed in sending a French army from the Mediterranean through the Persian Gulf or by the overland route to India. Secondly, they felt that the disunited Sikhs would not be able to check Shah Zaman's progress. In that event the Shah

[1] ibid., News from Jainagar, dated 12th October, 1798.
[2] *NAI*, Foreign Department, 24 December 1978, no. 17.

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would first capture Delhi and would then seize Oudh. The French generals in the service of Marathas would join him. This coalition might prove too strong for the British in India.

Lord Wellesley tried to check the possibility of this combination. He despatched Crow, a Bombay civilian to Sind outwardly on a commercial mission, but in reality to win over the Amirs. He offered Daulat Rao Sindhia a defensive treaty. In case of Shah Zaman's advance from Lahore towards Delhi the Maratha forces had orders to join the English. Wellesley collected a large army at Anupshahar on the Ganga commanded by Sir J.H. Craig. He assembled strong forces at Lucknow, Jaunpur and Kanauj.

The Governor-General also directed John Lumsden, Resident at Lucknow, to sound the views of the Sikh chiefs for the purpose of taking steps against Shah Zaman in concert with the English ; but he was not in favour of forming any formal alliance with them. He wrote : "It is not expedient at present to open any negotiations with the Seik chiefs on the ground of mutual co-operation against Zaman Shah. In the event of Daulat Rao Sindhia's early return to Hindostan such a measure may become advisable. I desire, therefore, that you will cultivate a friendly intercourse with Rai Singh and with the other principal chiefs of the Seiks, and that you will invite them to communicate to you after having consulted together on the subject either in writing, or through some agent properly accredited, a definite project of a general confederacy and plan of operations against Zaman Shah. You will transmit to me whatever proposition you shall receive from the Seiks on this subject, and you will inform them that you have requested this communication with them for the express purpose of submitting the result to my consideration."

The opinion of the British authorities was that Shah Zaman would not be able to advance to Delhi. Before doing so he must conciliate the Sikh chiefs, which was a difficult task, and might take considerable time detaining him in the Panjab till the end of cold weather, when he would return to his country.

In spite of these conjectures, steps were taken to meet the emergency. It was settled that the army to be assembled near Anupshahar should be joined by the Nawab of Oudh in person, accompanied by four or five of his own best battalions, fifty pieces of cannon, and as many serviceable horse as could be assembled numbering about thirteen hundred. They were to be further reinforced by two infantry battalions, six hundred horse, four pieces of cannon carrying balls of from

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ten to twelve pound weight, two mortars, eight hundred field pieces, and one hundred camel artillery from the troops under Almas Ali Khan.

It was determined that the mud fort of Mandi Ghat should be garrisoned by two more battalions of Almas Ali, and that a bridge of boats should be thrown across the Ganga at that place commanded by the guns mounted on the ramparts.

Almas Ali Khan was instructed to throw as strong a garrison as could be spared into the fort of Kasganj, to direct the corps under his authority at Etawah and Shikohabad, to march with all expedition to reinforce the garrison of Mandi Ghat, should the invader approach in either of those directions where they would be exposed to be cut off.

It was a part of the general plan of operation that a detachment of the Company's troops be left in such a position as to enable them to act at a short notice either to repress any appearance of revolt amongst the Rohillas or to check insurrection in whatever quarter of Oudh it should appear. It was therefore agreed that the corps commanded by Colonel Russell should also be reinforced by three of the Nawab's own battalions with their guns.

The British Government also decided to collect four lakh maunds of grain at Allahabad. The actual amount collected was as follows :

By Almas Ali Khan	50,000 maunds
By Madari Lal, Amil of Allahabad	100,000 maunds
By Tahsin Ali Khan	75,000 maunds
	2,25,000 maunds

On 21 November, 1798, Wellesley wrote to the Court of Directors : "I have the satisfaction to inform you that every possible precaution has been taken for the effectual defence of the frontier of Oudh."

Position of the Sikhs

The Sikhs knew that Shah Zaman was determined to repeat his exploits, and they expected his invasion in the winter of 1797. Some Sikh chiefs decided to meet at Amritsar on the Diwali day and to concert measures to oppose the invader. They invited Sahib Singh of Patiala to be present at Amritsar ; but he being a loyal subject of the Afghan monarch "declined the invitation to be present at the conference on the pretence that their plans this year would prove equally

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unefficacious like those of last season."

Sahib Singh was in correspondence with Shah Zaman. He sent his messengers to the invader whom they met at Peshawar, offering his submission and homage. They brought letters from the Shah and his Wazir for the Raja. Sahib Singh received these letters in full court, and after applying them to his forehead delivered them to his munshi to be read out.

About this time Milkha Singh was at Rawalpindi ; but the farthest outpost on the north-west frontier at Sarae Kali was held by his wife. It might surprise many, but not those who understand the spirit of Sikhism. After all, it was Sikh religion alone that produced about half a dozen women of great calibre and capacity who played an important part in the short political history of the Sikhs covering not more than a century. Ranjit Singh was at Pind Dadan Khan, Sahib Singh at Gujrat, Jodh Singh at Wazirabad, Dal Singh at Ramnagar, Jassa Singh son of Karam Singh at Chiniot, Chait Singh[1] and Mohar Singh at Lahore, Gulab Singh at Amritsar, Jodh Singh son of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia at Taran Taran, Jaimal Singh at Shakargarh, Bhag Singh, Nahar Singh, Fatah Singh and Jiwan Singh at Sialkot, Tara Singh Ghaiba at Nakodar, Baghel Singh's wife at Hariana near Hoshiarpur, and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia at Nadaun.

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The military strength of some of them was as follows :

1. Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi	2,000 horse
2. Sahib Singh of Gujrat	6,000 horse
3. Ranjit Singh	15,000 horse
4. Chait Singh and Mohar Singh of Lahore	16,000 horse
5. Gulab Singh of Amritsar	6,000 horse
6. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia	3,000 horse

The Sikh chiefs though powerful were at variance with one another, and were engaged in constant internal hostilities. There was therefore no prospect of successful opposition on their part. It was, however, expected that the Sikhs would not allow the Shah an easy passage, and that they would organise guerilla warfare, harass his troops and impede his progress.

General Craig's view

Major General Sir J.H. Craig who held the chief command of the

[1]Lahna Singh, the most popular Sikh chief, having died in September, 1797, was succeeded by his son Chait Singh.

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Company's forces at Anupshahar had a poor opinion about the Sikhs. He thought that the Sikhs were not able "to make any opposition at all to the Shah's approach." He believed that their power rested on rumour and that the delusion would appear "in the day of trial." He was of opinion that the Sikhs were neither "so numerous, not so hardy" as they were represented. He stated : "The mass of these people are a mixture of Mussulmen and Hindoos; the former of which from every motive, and the latter in detestation of the oppressions of their present Lords, will rejoice in the Shah's approach."

Shah Zaman's preparations

As a result of his messengers' reports Shah Zaman decided to invade India once more. A report stated : "The King has taken his resolution. Three days he clothed himself in red, and he told Wafadar Khan, his principal minister, that he must necessarily visit Hindustan whatever might be the consequences." He had several zealous objects in view. He wished to settle the affairs of the Panjab, and then detach a part of his army to Delhi. The country between the Jamuna and the Chambal was to be given to Shah Alam II, while the eastern boundary of the Afghan dominions was to be extended to the banks of the Jamuna as far as Karnal. He also designed to leave one of his officers to manage the government of Delhi.

At the Shah's invitation troops began to pour into Kabul. The great concourse of soldiers in the capital raised prices of various articles of food considerably.[1] Shah Zaman soon collected an army of 60,000 horse, provided with 2,000 camel artillery and jizairs and thirty-five pieces of cannon ; while the number of camp-followers and baggage camels could not be determined.[2]

Shah Zaman was bestowing his favours at this time on Rahmatullah Khan whom he granted the title of Wafadar Khan. He was a crafty and cunning person, "an intriguer with soft voice and silky manners, cringing to his superiors, overbearing and insolent to all others." He was a Sadozai, an Afghan clan to which the Durrani kings belonged. He was also connected with the royal family, being a brother to a wife of Shuja-ul-Mulk, the real brother of Shah Zaman. He became a rival of Mukhtar-ud-daulah Hafiz Sher Muhammad Khan Bamizai, son of Shah Vali Khan, in whose family the office of the wazir was

[1]Wheat was sold 13 kg and inferior grain 20 kg to the rupee.

[2]A report put the camels at 50,000, which was evidently a much exaggerated number.

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declared to be hereditary by Ahmad Shah. Besides, he was the leader of the Durranis. The Shah appointed Wafadar Khan minister for Indian affairs. By this step he alienated the sympathy of the Durrani tribe. Still greater mistake was committed by him in keeping both the rival ministers with him during his campaign. Furthermore, he worsened the situation by consulting both of them on Indian affairs. He accepted the advice of Wafadar Khan, and publicly criticised the opinion expressed by Sher Muhammad Khan. On the eve of his departure for India, the Shah distributed in the army two lakhs of rupees in cash and 4,000 costly khil'ats.

Departure for India

Shah Zaman left Kabul early in September, 1798, and reached Peshawar by the end of the month. He received the revenues of the province in merchandise and spices and distributed these commodities among his troops.

Then he discussed the question of the route Some officers were in favour of marching via Multan, Bahawalpur and Bikaner, in order to avoid conflict with the Sikhs. It was suggested that Pratap Singh the Raja of Jaipur, and Bhim Singh the Raja of Jodhpur at the head of 14,000 and 12,000 troops respectively might co-operate with the Shah. Shah Zaman did not agree to follow a long, circuitous and tedious route.

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Encounter with the Sikhs

Shah Zaman left Peshawar on 13 October, 1798. Three bridges of boats were laid across the Indus at Attock. His advance-guard crossed the river on 19 October. Islam Khan, a British messenger was present in Shah Zaman's camp. He reported that a section of the advance-guard was placed in the command of the son of Ahmad Khan Shahanchibashi and Madad Khan. The Sikh outpost at Sarae Kali had been evacuated by Milkha Singh's wife who managed to reach Rawalpindi, where two assistants of Milkha Singh were busy in winding up their business. Milkha Singh having already fought two engagements with the Mullukia zamindars at Sarae Kali and Rawalpindi had fallen back by 50 kms. Having been taken unawares the Sikhs lost the day in the skirmish, and both the Sikh chiefs were captured. They were sent to Shah Zaman at Attock. They offered a ransom of three lakhs of rupees. The Shah accepted the money and "ordered both of them to be drowned in Attock."

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"All this", wrote Islam Khan, "I have seen with my own eyes."

Shah Zaman reached Hasan Abdal, and Sarae Kali, and arrived at Rawalpindi on 3 November. His advance-guard consisting of 15,000 chosen horse under the sons of Payendah Khan, Husain Beg Khan and other sardars was 50 kms ahead of him. The Shah reached Rohtas on 16 November. He was joined there by Raja Ghaylaw, the Muslim chief of Chakwal with a body of 4,000 horse. Milkha Singh, Ranjit Singh and Karam Singh lay encamped at Rasulpur, and Sahib Singh was at Gujrat.

Dissension in the Durrani camp

As already pointed out Shah Zaman had given the chief control of his Indian campaign to Wafadar Khan by depriving his Wazir Sher Muhammad Khan of this office. The rivalry and jealousy between the two leaders was undermining the influence of Shah Zaman. On 16 November at Rohtas Wafadar Khan's men intercepted some letters supposed to have been written by Sher Muhammad Khan to Sikh chiefs warning them against the Shah's attack and exhorting them to hang about the Afghan army without fear. Wafadar Khan suggested that all authority should be taken away from the Wazir. Shah Zaman promised to investigate the matter.

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Skirmishes with the Sikhs

The Sikhs on this occasion were in a state of complete disunity and were quietly retiring before the Shah without offering any opposition. They had sent their families and riches to Mukerian and Dholbaha in Hoshiarpur district.

The Shah stayed at Jehlam town for two days, and arrived at Gujrat on 18 November. From here a detachment was directed towards Dinanagar, a territory where the Sikh population predominated. The son of Shahanchibashi led the vanguard, encamped at Wazirabad and massacred the inhabitants of three villages in the neighbourhood. The Shah wrote to Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra and the Raja of Jammu desiring them not to allow the Sikh families to take rufuge in the hills. The Shah's messengers also arrived at Jandiala to meet Bishambar Das.

The zamindars of Shahdara invited Nizam-ud-din of Kasur to take possession of the forts evacuated by the Sikhs. He arrived there at the head of 400 horse. On 18 November he was attacked by Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh with 500 horse. Nizam-ud-din

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received a shot in the leg and fell from his horse. He was instantly removed from the battlefield, and he recovered in two hours after his fall. Fifty Afghans lost their lives in the action, while only twenty Sikhs were killed. The son of Shahanchibashi came to the rescue of the Kasur chief. He massacred the inhabitants of the village, but did not pursue the Sikhs. He then retired to Eminabad, and there waited for the arrival of the Shah.

On 19 November, Wazir Wafadar Khan was somewhere between Gujrat and Wazirabad. Ranjit Singh, Sahib Singh, Nahar Singh and Sondhe Singh attacked him. Wafadar Khan lost a considerable number of his troops and retreated towards Gujrat for about 15 kms. The Sikhs fell back towards Wazirabad. Ranjit Singh sent for Bhag Singh, Gulab Singh Bhangi and Jaimal Singh Kanhiya who had sent off their families and effects to the hills and were staying at Amritsar with 4,000 horse. Bibi Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh, who lay encamped at Amritsar continually reproached them for not replying to Ranjit Singh : "If you are disposed to assist Ranjit Singh, advance and join him ; if not, throw off that dress and take mine ; give me your clothes and I will march against the enemy."

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Some Sikh chiefs cleverly managed to get into the rear of the Shah, and at a place about 40 kms from the rear of Shah Zaman's army plundered a caravan consisting of merchants with considerable property. This attack exercised great influence on the Shah. He hesitated to march to Delhi leaving the Sikhs behind unsubdued. In his opinion the Sikhs were unequal to a conflict in the open field ; but their guerilla attacks could greatly harass and distress his army.

That day's letter stated that Shah Zaman had established his authority and regulated the country as far as Jehlam. From Jehlam to Amritsar the country lay deserted. The Shah wrote to Nizam-ud-din of Kasur to prevent the people of Lahore from running away assuring them of the Shah's protection and promising him the governorship of Lahore in return. Nizam-ud-din explained his inability to get the people back to the city.

The newswriter laments again and again for the dissensions prevailing among the Sikhs : "Here are many Sikh chiefs who if they were united could collect a body of fifty or sixty thousand fighting men ; but discord, jealousy and want of spirit deprive them of all power of opposition."

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The Sikhs gather at Amritsar

J. Collins, Resident with Sindhia stationed at Fatahgarh, employed a large number of messengers to obtain news about Shah Zaman's progress. These persons had a difficult task to perform. The Sikhs would not allow them a passage through their country and if detected they were at once put to death. The Afghan army also strictly guarded its own secrets. The Resident wrote to the Governor-General on 15 December, 1798 : "The difficulty of obtaining correct intelligence from the camp of Zaman Shah increases daily. Of fourteen cossids sent by me towards the Attock not even one has yet returned. But unfortunately certain accounts have been received of the plunder and murder of two of these poor men by the Sicks who are as active as the troops of the Shah in intercepting all letters from this quarter."

The news of 20 and 21 November stated that Ranjit Singh and Milkha Singh came to Amritsar from Shahdara, and interviewed Budh Singh, Gulab Singh, Bhag Singh, Jaimal Singh and Bibi Sada Kaur. Bhag Singh sent fifty camels laden with his goods and property to a place of safety across the Satluj, and himself remained at Amritsar with five pieces of cannon and 2,000 horse. These Sikh chiefs invited Tara Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Gurdit Singh, Bhanga Singh, Mahtab Singh and Rae Singh to join them in fighting against the Shah saying : "Victory is the gift of God. Let us make an effort to oppose him."

At this invitation Tara Singh sent away his property from Nakodar to the hills and was expected to arrive at Amritsar soon with 500 well mounted troops. The report stated that the Jalandhar Doab lay almost deserted, and all the people had fled to the hills and jungles. In cities such as Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Bajwara and Sarae Dakhni no human being was to be seen.

The prime minister slapped in Shah's presence

The news of 22 November stated that dissensions arose in the Shah's camp to a considerable degree. It was reported that Sher Muhammad Khan was speaking to Shah Zaman on some important subject, and that the Shah being convinced of the Wazir's sound arguments felt pleased. This greatly incensed Wafadar Khan, who opposed the opinion of the Wazir. In the course of discussion hot words passed between the two, and Wafadar Khan indiscreetly struck the Wazir in the face. Sher Muhammad Khan considering the opportunity to return

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the insult unfavourable took it patiently. But his feelings were so much hurt that he made up his mind to bring disgrace to Wafadar Khan by causing failure of the Shah's campaign. In consequence he secretly encouraged Ranjit Singh and other Sikh chiefs to continue to harass the royal camp with their guerilla tactics assuring them that the Shah was not disposed to continue long in the country.

Emboldened by this intelligence the Sikhs commenced "infesting the camp in every quarter, and scarcely a day passed when they did not carry away horses or other property. Supplies were also cut off on their way to the camp, and thus great embarrassment was caused among the royal troops."

Submission of the Raja of Jammu

On 23 November Shah Zaman sent a detachment with a letter to the Raja of Jammu demanding an explanation for his having joined the Sikhs against the Shahanchibashi, to pay the usual tribute and to attend upon him in person. Raja Jit Singh son of Dalel Singh who had succeeded to the throne in June, 1797, received the troops with professions of loyalty and obedience. He wrote in reply that he and his ancestors had always been the slaves of the royal threshold ; he never had the audacity to assist the Sikhs in plundering His Majesty's troops and was ready to pay the tribute. He despatched Mian Mota, the Superintendent of his household, to Shah Zaman.

Collisions with the Sikhs

As the Shah was moving by slow marches towards Lahore, collisions with the Sikhs were growing more common. On 23 November a contingent of the Durrani army attacked a body of 600 Sikh horse who were returning from the hills after escorting their families. The Sikhs were not prepared to fight and they managed to escape after a brief resistance.

On 24 November Shah Zaman was informed that the Sikhs at Amritsar had taken alarm. He quietly sent a contingent of 10,000 troops to advance to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh at the head of 500 horse were patrolling about 13 kms from Amritsar. They sighted the Afghans and instantly engaged them in a fight. On hearing of this engagement Gulab Singh, Jodh Singh and Budh Singh with 2,000 chosen horse joined in the combat. The battle raged for three hours, and about 500 men on each side were killed. The Afghans

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were ultimately forced to retreat to Lahore.

The Sikhs encouraged secretly

The situation in the Durrani camp was daily deteriorating owing to the jealousy between Wafadar Khan and Sher Muhammad Khan. On 24 November another quarrel took place between them, and some of their partisans came to blows. "It seems that Sher Muhammad Khan writes privately to the Sikh chiefs exhorting them to take courage, to remain with their forces at Amritsar and harass the Shah's army, which he says consists of only 30,000 fighting men, the rest of the people being vagabonds and camp-followers. He writes too that the Shah is afraid of them."

Shah Zaman tries to procure assistance

Shah Zaman needed some more troops and money. He wrote to Muzaffar Khan Sadozai, governor of Multan, for assistance. On 25 November he received a reply from his governor of Multan saying that the summer crops had been destroyed by flooded rivers. His income was little. Some parts of his province had been taken possession of by Bahawalpur. A few territories were seized by the Sikhs. The Syāls of Jhang paid him no revenues. He had already supplied the Shah Rs. 82,000 and was endeavouring to procure more money. The Shah wrote in reply that he must provide him with 5,000 troops and their expenses.

On 26 November the Shah and Wafadar Khan sent letters to the hill rajas enjoining them to plunder the Sikhs and not to allow other refugees to take shelter in their territories, also to pay tribute and send their vakils to the camp.

On that day the Shah issued orders not to send the foraging parties towards Amritsar but in the direction of Eminabad. The Shah accepted whatever tribute was paid to him by any zamindar.

Sahib Singh Bedi of Una

On 27 November the Shah lay encamped at Shahdara. On inquiries he was informed that the Sikhs were reorganising their forces at Amritsar. Ranjit Singh, Sahib Singh, Gulab Singh and Budh Singh were stationed there with 10,000 troops. Sahib Singh Bedi was also there; but he was preparing to leave for the hills. Tara Singh Ghaiba told him that if he would retire to the hills, others might follow suit as the Bedi was considered the chief leader of the

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Sikhs. The Bedi agreed to stay, and encamped at Nanakpur with 4,000 chosen horse.

onflicting counsels given to Shah Zaman

On 28 November Shah Zaman sought advice from his two leading nobles. Sher Muhammad Khan was summoned first. He stated that it was not desirable for the Shah to advance to Delhi. To support this view he represented that fresh disturbances were expected at Herat. The army was distressed for want of money. The people of the country through fear of plunder and massacre had fled. The Sikhs had sent their property to places of safety and were ready to oppose him. It required long time and great treasure to enable him to extirpate the Sikhs. If he advanced to Delhi, the Sikhs would be in his rear. Further the Marathas and the English were united, and the Shah was not in a position to subdue them. If he were surrounded he would find it difficult to retreat. The Shah declared that he would verify his statements.

Next Wafadar Khan was called in. He begged His Majesty not to be under any apprehensions. "God would order all well. How could the Sikhs oppose the Royal army ? The Marathas too could not make head against it. War against the English would certainly be a serious affair but when His Majesty appeared at Delhi, the Musalman troops would assemble from all quarters to join him. The Rajas of Hindostan were all disaffected to the Maratha Government and would come over to the Shah. The most advisable measure would be to amuse the English and oppose the Marathas."

Shah Zaman then sent for Sher Muhammad Khan and told him what Wafadar Khan had advised. He submitted that although His Majesty had marched 400 kms from Attock to Lahore, the collection amounted to no more than one lakh of rupees. Two years previously twenty-two lakhs of rupees were levied in Lahore. He suggested to the Shah to give up his plans of advancing to Delhi and to endeavour to establish his rule in the Panjab by conciliating the Sikhs and kindly treating the people.

The Shah agreed with Sher Muhammad Khan, and proclaimed in his army that "any person committing outrages against the people should have his belly ripped up."

The Sikhs get ready for an offensive

The news of 29 November stated that Bhag Singh, Ranjit Singh,

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Gulab Singh, Chait Singh and Sahib Singh with 10,000 horse marched from Amritsar towards Lahore to harass the Shah's troops. They put all their forts at Amritsar in a condition of defence and left 300 tried men in each. Dal Singh with 1,000 horse and Fatah Singh and Jaimal Singh with 2,000 horse were in their forts at Amritsar. Bibi Sada Kaur with 1,000 troops was also there. Tara Singh and Sahib Singh Bedi were near the hills, where were stationed 7,000 horse with 21 pieces of cannon. Nearly two lakhs of fugitives had also gone in that direction. Many people had taken shelter at Patiala and Malerkotla. The Raja of Jammu pretended to be obedient; but he was not prepared to betray or oppress the fugitives in his country.

Shah Zaman enters Lahore, 30 November, 1798

On 30 November, 1798, Shah Zaman went from the bank of the Ravi over the bridge on an elephant to the fort of Lahore. All the nobles presented nazars according to their ranks. Nizam-ud-din, the chief of Kasur, who had lately been wounded in an action with Ranjit Singh, and who had recovered by this time, presented a nazar of five gold muhars, and was honoured with a *khilat* of three pieces. The Shah ordered the people of Lahore to illuminate the city for three nights in honour of his arrival.

Shah's fruit-bearing caravan plundered

It was reported to the Shah that 2,000 camels laden with fresh and dried fruits escorted by 1,500 troops on their way from Kabul to Lahore were plundered by Dal Singh, uncle of Ranjit Singh, in the village of Talwandi Musa Khan, 11 kms north-east of Gujranwala. The Shah ordered a detachment of 10,000 horse to pursue him ; but the troops being unable to come at him returned. Dal Singh, in addition to fruits, had secured 50 horses, 70 camels, 16 mules and many shawls. He joined the camp of the Sikhs whom he advised to retire to Amritsar for the sake of safety. There they could take shelter in several forts and in the neighbouring jungles. The Sikhs started laying waste the country nearly 150 kms all round Lahore.

The Mughal Emperor

Shah Zaman's arrival at Lahore filled Shah Alam and his son Akbar Shah with great joy. They decided to go as far as Panipat or even beyond to Patiala to receive the invader.

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A skirmish

On that day a skirmish took place between a party of the Afghans and the Sikhs somewhere between Lahore and Amritsar in which five or six men were killed and wounded. The Sikhs being smaller in number were obliged to retreat. Friendly letters from the Shah and Wafadar Khan were sent to Bishambar Das, the Guru of Jandiala. Bishambar Das commanded a contingent of 2,000 horse. The vakil of the Raja of Jammu with a letter and a nazar of 101 rupees from his master waited upon Shah Zaman.

The Sikhs cut off supplies

The Sikhs realized that in view of their disunity the best way of striking at the Durrani army was to cut off supplies coming to their camp. Consequently, on 2 December Ranjit Singh and six other chiefs with 11,000 chosen horse encamped 16 kms from Amritsar on the Lahore road. One thousand of them advanced to forage. They came into collision with an Afghan contingent, but were beaten off. The Sikhs sent various parties towards Kasur also and cut off supplies of grain from reaching the Shah's camp from two directions, Kasur and Amritsar. Grain was selling in the Durrani camp at 13 kg per rupee.

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Some troops of Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur who had gone on a foraging expedition were attacked at Kot Lakhpat, 13 kms from Lahore, by Ranjit Singh at the head of 400 horse. A fierce fight took place, and "although almost all of them were wounded on the occasion, they did not allow the Sikhs to possess themselves of the forage. The skirmish continued till after sunset, when Runjeet Singh was compelled by the darkness to retreat."

Another "small party of the Sikhs" attacked the royal camp at Lahore, plundered the merchants "with impunity" and made good their escape.

Some Sikhs submit to the Durrani

Some Sikhs wished to submit to Shah Zaman. They would not do so in broad daylight, and desired to wait upon the Shah at night.

In the evening of 4 December Shah Zaman went out to visit the city. He rode on an elephant. The bankers and traders illuminated the streets and showered upon him artificial flowers of gold and silver. Then there was a display of fireworks. The Shah was pleased

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at this demonstration of joy and gave away shawls to bazar chaudhris. He returned to the fort at 8 O'clock.[1]

The Sikh sardars availed themselves of this opportunity and made obeisance to the Shah at the gate of the fort. They were admitted to his presence. Jodh Singh, brother-in-law of Dal Singh, presented the Shah with a horse and five rupees, and received a *khilat*. Nidhan Singh of Shaikhupura and Wazir Singh Nakai offered five horses and five rupees each. They were honoured with *khilats*. According to Ganesh Das Vadehra, Ranjit Singh's agent Ram Dayal Kohatia, Sahib Singh Bhangi's representative Diwan Ratan Chand Vaid and Dal Singh Akalgarhia's vakil Diwan Mohkam Chand also waited on the Shah and received *khilats*. These Sikh chiefs were treated with distinction, were assured of the management of their own districts, and were instructed to invite other Sikh sardars to follow their example.

J. Collins wrote to the Governor-General from camp near Bilgram on 23 December, 1798 : "Recent intelligence from Amritsar states that Zaman Shah is at present endeavouring to conciliate the zamindars who possess lands adjacent to Lahore, and that he treats with much kindness and liberality all Sikhs of any sort of note who can be prevailed on to attend at his Durbar for the purpose of acknowledging his authority."

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Stray expeditions despatched against the Sikhs

The zamindars of Khureaheh (Ghurka=20 kms south-east of Patti) and Purwaheh[2] (Pannuan=20 kms north-east of Patti) at the instigation of some Sikhs plundered a village belonging to Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur. The zamindars of that village lodged a complaint with Shah Zaman who sent a detachment against both the villages which were destroyed and their inhabitants put to the sword.

At the request of Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur a detachment of 5,000 horse was sent towards Kasur on 7 December to check the Sikh raids which were growing very common in his territory. The Afghans fell on the village Rogheen, massacred all the inhabitants, and carried off large booty.

[1]That day wheat flour was selling in the Shah's camp at the rate of 25 kg and ghī 1½ kg for a rupee.

[2]In the original records it is stated that both are situated 30 kms from Lahore and 5 from Patti.

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In the night the news reached that Kasur was besieged by the Sikhs and in consequence Nizam-ud-din was at once ordered to go to Kasur. Some Durrani troops were also despatched to march towards the road of Multan to frighten the Sikhs to raise the siege. This had the desired effect as the Sikhs retired before their arrival after plundering some portions of the city. Nizam-ud-din thereupon returned to Lahore.

On 9 December Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur reported to the Shah that 4,000 Sikhs had again collected near the banks of Beas in the parganah of Patti ; and were laying waste his territory. Shah Zaman ordered two detachments of 12,000 each with five days' provisions to march against them. On their approach the Sikhs dispersed in all directions.[1]

The following day Ranjit Singh, Bhag Singh, Gulab Singh, Budh Singh, Fatah Singh and Bibi Sada Kaur gathered at Amritsar. They received a letter from Bhag Singh of Hallowal on the western bank of the Ravi stating that a Begam of the Shah's harem and a number of merchants escorted by a small force were coming from Peshawar to Lahore, and he asked them to plunder the party. Dal Singh at once got ready for the job and easily succeeded in his object.

Several zamindars of note were staying in Lahore. When they wanted to take leave of the Afghan monarch, he detained them a little longer with a view to secure their assistance in dealing with the Sikhs. Among them were Jafar Khan Kukka of Khanpur, Malik Amanat of Pindi, Nur Khan of Katas, Raja of Dhani, Raja Kifayat Muhammad Husain of Rasulnagar, Raja of Kussuck (Jhang), Raja of Pothohar, Raja Fatah of Khattak, Raja of Jalalpur, Karam Khan of Dunkra), Raja of Chathas, Nidhan Singh of Shaikhupura, Wazir Singh Nakai and Nathu Singh vakil of the Raja of Jammu. Guru Bishambar Das's vakil named Murun also joined with presents consisting of a horse, a pair of shawls, two quintals of black pepper, 100 fine turbans and Rs. 500 cash.

Attempt at good administration

Shah Zaman appeared to be intent on good administration. On 4 December Wafadar Khan presented a man before the Shah. He calumniated the inhabitants of the city and endeavoured to persuade

[1]A list of current prices of articles in the royal bazar indicated the following rates per rupee : Wheat 20 kg ; Rice 12 kg ; Mash 15 kg ; Mung 15 kg ; Raw sugar 14 kg ; Ghī 2½ kg ; Mustard oil 12 kg.

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him to lay the city under contribution. The Shah was greatly displeased and ordered his belly to be ripped up.

On 10 December some grain merchants complained to the Shah that five or six soldiers in the previous night had broken open and plundered two shops. Orders were at once issued to find out the offenders, to lead them through the camp with arrows struck through their noses and rip up their bellies. "This sentence was carried into execution."

Shah Zaman tries to conciliate the Sikhs

Shah Zaman failed to solve the Sikh problem. He attempted to deal hard blows at them, but they produced no effect. He then "ordered Wafadar Khan to endeavour to sow dissensions among the Sikh chiefs," and his Minister assured him that "it was the very thing he was meditating;" but all this was in vain.

Some shrewd Sikh chiefs understood this game, and it produced the opposite effect. They tried to strengthen their resources by procuring large supplies of war material particularly of gunpowder. Being short of funds they borrowed Rs. 10,000 from Khushhal Singh, the Granthi of Hari Mandar. They also called to Amritsar Tara Singh, Sahib Singh Bedi, Sukhu Singh the adopted son of Baghel Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and other chiefs of the Jalandhar Doab.

On 13 December the Shah again held a long discussion regarding the menace of the Sikhs who were dashing to pieces all the dreams of his life. He advised Wafadar Khan to spare no pains in conciliating the Sikhs, remarking that "although the Durranis were apparently brave, they were at bottom timid."

Wafadar Khan who was losing confidence of the Shah as well as of the army made another attempt to conciliate the Sikh chiefs assembled at Amritsar. He deputed his Diwan, Atma Ram, with costly *khilats* and rich presents to induce them to acknowledge the authority of Shah Zaman. The Sikh sardars displayed total aversion to place "any confidence in the promises made to them on the part of the Shah."

While communicating this news J. Collins wrote to the Governor-General from Anupshahr on 2 January, 1799 : "If the above information be true, and my private agent has generally been correct in his intelligence, I think it likely that Zaman Shah will soon feel it

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expedient to recross the Attock from his inability to raise money for the payment of his troops."

Some Sikh chiefs secretly indicated a desire to the Diwan to form an alliance with the Shah. This was soon discovered by shrewd Sikh chiefs, and it excited animosity amongst them. Eventually on 15 December, a new oath of fidelity was taken by them, and they solemnly engaged to act in concert against the common enemy.

The Sikhs redoubled their efforts to harass the Shah. They organized several foraging parties and despatched them in all directions to cut off the supplies coming to Lahore. The Shah's camp at the capital was always kept in a state of alarm, as the Sikhs attacked it every night with musketry fire. So terrified were the Durranis that "none dare go out against them." A guard of 500 horse was stationed day and night to protect the Ravi bridge.

On 20 December the Sikhs had a skirmish with a foraging party of the Afghans across the Ravi towards Eminabad. A few men were killed and wounded on both sides. The Sikhs carried off some camels and ponies.

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The Shah made a compact with Nidhan Singh of Shaikhupura for a tribute of Rs. 25,000, of which Rs. 10,000 were to be paid in instalments, while for Rs. 15,000 imperial camels sent to graze were to be protected.

On 21 December Ranjit Singh and Dal Singh involved themselves in a fight with a Durrani detachment. Another party of the Sikhs brought ten horses which they had seized from a Durrani foraging squad.

Wafadar Khan sent another agent named Neki Singh to Amritsar on 22 December to negotiate with the Sikhs for peace. Sahib Singh Bedi on behalf of the Sikh chiefs declined to entertain the proposal, remarking that "they had taken the country by the sword and would preserve it in the same manner."

While Neki Singh was still at Amritsar some stray parties of the Sikhs were attacking Lahore continuously. On 23 December Shah Zaman ordered his tents to be pitched inside the fort owing to insecurity created by the Sikhs. He also suspected that Sher Muhammad Khan was in league with the Sikhs. The Sikhs had grown so bold as to attack the very suburbs of Lahore in broad daylight. The Shah ordered all but the Peshawari Gate to be kept shut day and night. A guard of thirty men was appointed at each gate. Nobody was allowed to enter or leave the city except on strict inquiries made from him.

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Disappointment in the Durrani camp

Shah Zaman's disappointment was growing daily. He had not succeeded in crushing the Sikhs. The expedition to Delhi still appeared a mere dream. Troops were hard pressed for want of money. Besides disagreement in his camp was steadily on the increase. In the afternoon on 23 December the Shah held a conversation with Wafadar Khan, and told him, that he had been at Lahore nearly a month, but the country was not regulated, nor were the Sikhs extirpated. Wafadar Khan requested the Shah to remain in Lahore for another month, adding that some zamindars had paid tribute and others were coming to settle it. The Sikhs would be properly punished, and afterwards an Afghan viceroy with a strong army for the preservation of peace would be appointed.

The Durrani chiefs represented that notwithstanding the prime ministership was invested in a Sadozai instead of a Bamizai, the troops which were formerly well-paid had not enough to live upon. They expressed their inability to serve under Wafadar Khan and tried to persuade the Shah to restore Sher Muhammad Khan to that office.

On 25 December Shah Zaman ordered all the nobles to array their men and material for inspection in the Shalamar Garden. At this time all the troops, their leaders excepted, complained that the Shah on marching towards Lahore had prohibited them from plundering, murdering, carrying off cattle, or making slaves, and having now brought them to Lahore kept them as if in prison and would not suffer them to plunder ; but on the contrary tried them in a court of justice. They added that on such terms they could not serve ; but if he allowed them to plunder they would certainly serve him with fidelity ; or if this were disallowed, they required regularly to be paid, remarking that what they then received was scarcely enough to support their lives.

The Shah replied that if plunder were permitted, it would be disgraceful to him, and therefore he would never consent to it, but if they chose they might return home.

The nobles and troops remained in the Garden ; but the Shah being displeased returned to the fort, having ordered all troops, stores, baggage and bazars to cross over the Ravi to Shahdara.

Sher Muhammad Khan attended the Shah and observed that His Majesty should not mind what the troops had said. He had come on an important expedition, and should not give it up for a trivial matter. He insisted on Shah's settling the affairs of the Panjab first,

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as his immediate return march would be disgraceful not only to him but to the whole Afghan nation. All the sardars supported the ex-Wazir, declaring that they were entirely devoted to him, and prevailed upon him to relinquish his design. The Shah said that "he wished no person to be hurt without his orders."

Differences among the Sikhs

Meanwhile Neki Singh, the Durrani agent at Amritsar, was achieving a fair measure of success in his negotiations with the Sikh chiefs. On 24 December the Sikh sardars held a council at the residence of Dal Singh. They decided that they must keep up appearance with Shah Zaman, observing that if the Shah thought it proper to fight, they considered themselves a match for him. Tara Singh declined to approve of this proposal. It was therefore resolved that each might act as he thought fit. Some other Sikh chiefs were coming to Amritsar. Milkha Singh also joined them at the head of 500 horse. War material was pouring into the city.

On 25 December the Sikh chiefs told Neki Singh that he was well aware of the poor resources of the country, which rendered revenues just sufficient to pay tribute to the Shah. They requested Neki Singh to prevail on the Shah to return home. Neki Singh gave on behalf of the Shah two pairs of shawls and three sarpeches to Ranjit Singh and one pair of shawls to Tara Singh. These Sikh chiefs gave to Neki Singh for the Shah seven bows and seven quivers full of fine arrows. Ghasi Singh on the part of Sahib Singh and Mohan Singh on the part of Ranjit Singh were to accompany Neki Singh. At the same time the Sikhs did not neglect precautionary measures. "The Sikhs are on the alarm, keep the saddles on their horses, and are under arms day and night."

At the time of departure of the Durrani agent Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh granted *khil'ats* and Rs. 500 in cash to Neki Singh. They informed him that they were prepared to return all the booty captured from the Shah's troops if they were favoured. By way of further instructions "Ranjit Singh told Neki Singh that if the Shah would appoint him to the charge of the Fort of Lahore, he would pay one lakh of rupees as nazarana."

Sir J.H. Craig expressed his opinion to Lord Wellesley regarding the attitude of the Sikhs from Fatahgarh on 13 December, 1798 :

"Were the Seiks united as nation, I should think it scarcely possible that they would ever enter into the Shah's interests, they must

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know that their existence is incompatible with them, and they must feel that by forwarding that Prince's views, they would only render him the more perfect master of their fate; but in their present distracted and disunited state, where no union or concert is to be expected, where no prospect appears of successful opposition, where mutual jealousy and distrust must magnify the danger and aggravate their fears,—it is not highly probable, that distant considerations will be sacrificed to the interests of the moment,—is not likely, that viewing it as the only possible means of securing their personal safety, they may be anxious to anticipate each other in meeting the Shah's advances."

Neki Singh left Amritsar on 28 December, 1798, accompanied by vakils of all the Sikh chiefs who had collected at Amritsar. Dal Singh came to see him off for 10 kms from Amritsar.

The Wazir granted interviews to all the Sikh chiefs and their agents who had come to Lahore in the afternoon on 29 December. They were warmly received, and shown special marks of favour. The Sikh vakils sent letter to Amritsar where they were received on 31 December. They stated that "when they arrived within 15 kms of that city, a Sardar with 1,000 horse met and escorted them into the town, and that His Majesty's Umara were pleased with their arrival."

Fight with the Nakais

While peace parleys were going on, some Nakai Sikhs gathered at Chunian. Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur was terrified, and on 29 December he requested the Shah to send a Durrani force against them. The Afghan troops marched with lightning speed and took the Sikhs by surprise. A desperate engagement was the result which lasted for several hours. The Durranis then suddenly returned to Lahore.

Ghazi-ud-din Khan held a conference with the Wazir, and observed that as the Sikh vakils were expected, it was improper to attack the Sikhs. He advised that as the Sikhs were in possession of a large part of his Majesty's Indian dominions, they should be asked to accompany the Shah to Delhi. The Wazir replied that it was for the same purpose they had been required to attend, and the Shah had halted at Lahore so long.

Two Sikh chiefs while foraging fell into the hands of the Durranis near Lahore in the afternoon of 29 December. "Their hair was cut off, and they were dismissed after having been made Musalmans."

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Ranjit Singh was enraged on hearing of both of these incidents. He took 1,000 choice horse and set out on the road to Lahore to retaliate upon the Durranis. He was followed by Chait Singh and Sahib Singh with 2,000 horse. Dal Singh persuaded these chiefs to return pointing out that it was improper to commit any depredations until the return of their vakils from the Shah.

Some settlements

From 1 to 3 January, 1799, the Shah held repeated conferences in private with the Wazir and Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur, who never retired from the presence until 9 O'clock in the evening each day. The Sikh vakils from Amritsar were admitted to several interviews with the Wazir, and received from him a regular allowance of ghi, sugar, rice, goats, etc. Ghazi-ud-din Khan used his influence in accommodating matters with the Sikhs. On the recommendation of Nizam-ud-din Khan garrisons of Shah's troops were re-established at Gujrat, Ramnagar, Sialkot and other places. The salt made at a place 32 kms from Lahore was farmed to a Mahajan for one year for fifty-two thousand rupees. Nizam-ud-din Khan was also required to prepare a comparative statement of the income of each mahāl comprising in the province of Lahore, showing revenue under the Mughal Emperors and the present regime. The public servants were directed to purchase lead, powder, cannon balls and cattle for artillery.

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So far everything went well, but the Shah's mind was not free from anxiety. The soldiery was discontented on account of Shah's preventing them from general plunder and rapine. Indeed his troops "were in such a great distress for money as to be reduced to the necessity of selling their apparel in order to procure provisions." The Shah was grieved at this state of affairs ; but his good nature, just disposition and the youthful age, would not permit him to be cruel.

Wellesley's diplomacy

Meanwhile treachery and diplomacy were at work to upset all the plans of the Afghan invader. Mehdi Ali Khan, originally an Iranian, had settled in India. His notoriety of character brought public disgrace upon him at Haidarbad. He then took up service under Duncan at Ghazipur. Later on, when Shah Zaman started on his last Indian campaign, Duncan, as Governor of Bombay, under instructions of Lord Wellesley, despatched Mehdi Ali Khan to Iran

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to cause rebellion in Afghanistan with the assistance of the government of Iran. Mehdi Ali Khan discharged his duties very successfully. Fatah Ali Shah, the king of Iran, marched to invade Khorasan in order to divert the attention of Shah Zaman from India. He advanced as far as Sabzwar, about 1,000 kms from Kabul. At the same time Mehdi Ali Khah incited Prince Mahmud of Herat to raise the standard of revolt. Mehdi Ali Khan received a reward of about three lakhs of rupees.

Shah Zaman retires to Kabul

This news was brought to Shah Zaman at noon on 3 January, 1799, by Ghose Khan's special messengers from Herat accompanied by a letter from Prince Kaiser to certify its authenticity, and calling upon the Shah to return to Afghanistan instantly. On hearing this the Shah at once decided to retreat. He ordered for his advance tents to be pitched at Shahdara and instructed to have all the camp equippage, bazars, etc., sent after them.

Then the Sikh vakils were granted an interview. They presented their nazars on behalf of their masters. They praised the Shah for his high character and justice, expressing the hope "that the Panjab would be allowed to continue in their possession as *madad-e-mu'ash*" (means of livelihood). The Shah was pleased with their address, and answered : "It is well. I leave this country to you free from assessment (mu'af) ; continue to occupy and cultivate it with confidence." He then bestowed a doshala upon every one of them, and kept them with him as an escort to protect his rear. They remained one stage behind the Shah. They appear to have accompanied him up to river Jehlam.

So strict and so urgent were the orders of the Shah for the immediate return journey that at 3 O'clock in the afternoon the camp baggage and Shah's own effects were packed up, and then sent across the Ravi to Shahdara. That very day the new moon of Ramzan appeared. The Shah celebrated Id at Lahore in a hurry, and got ready to leave for home instantly.

In the morning of 4 January Shah Zaman mounted an elephant along with the Wazir and accompanied by his nobles crossed over to Shahdara. Ghazi-ud-din Khan accompanied him; but Bhambu Khan and Nizam-ud-din Khan of Kasur were allowed to take leave.

The Sikhs were constantly in touch with the happenings at Lahore. Chait Singh and Milkha Singh journeyed from Amritsar in the night

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between 3 and 4 January, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Lahore. No sooner did the Shah cross the Ravi than both Sikh chiefs entered Lahore and established their rule. Most of the other Sikh sardars also retired to their own territories. Only four sardars, Sahib Singh Bedi, Budh Singh, Gulab Singh and Jodh Singh, continued to stay at Amritsar.

The Sikhs decided to harass him while crossing the river Chenab. Ranjit Singh dissuaded them from executing this design, and the Shah was allowed to return to Kabul unmolested. Ranjit Singh's intention was to win the sympathy of the Muslim population of the Panjab and the favour of the Shah for political reasons.

Shah Zaman had to endure great hardships on his way back. The rains fell in torrents almost daily. The road was broken up and became impassable. The soldiers discontented and worn out either fell to the rear or deserted him. The plundering tribes took advantage of the Shah's distress and stripped the stragglers of their baggage.

The Shah and most of his troops had crossed river Jehlam. The guns were lying in the dry sandy bed ready to be put in the boats. The river was suddenly flooded. The guns were swept away to the mid current, and could not be extricated.

Shah Zaman reached Peshawar on 30 January, 1799; but owing to severe cold and with a view to reorganize his troops to save them from destruction in the Khaibar Pass he stayed there for a month and a half. He left Peshawar on 13 March, 1799.

This was the last Muslim invasion of India. The Khalsa though disunited had erected a wall of concrete against the north-western flood which had carried everything before it during the past eight hundred years.

Thus ended the stream of immigration of needy adventurers from Turkistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Baluchistan, which had supplied to various Muslim kingdoms in this country nearly all of their distinguished statesmen, eminent politicians, illustrious administrators and celebrated generals, the Indian Musalmans producing almost no celebrity during this long period.[1]

Invader *obiit sine prole.* The invader died without issue.

[1]About the close of 1799 a plot was hatched in Kabul by the leading chiefs mostly owing to the insolent behaviour of Wafadar Khan. The plot was betrayed and the conspirators including Payendah Khan, the most influential leader

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of the Barakzai tribe, were executed. Fatah Khan, the eldest son of Payendah Khan, escaped to Khorasan where he joined Prince Mahmud. At his instigation Mahmud captured Farah about (850 kms from Kabul) and Kandhar (500 kms from Kabul). Shah Zaman advanced to oppose his brother and met him at Sar-e-Asp. The astute Fatah Khan won over Shah Zaman's chief ally Ahmad Khan Nurzai of Jalalabad. Shah Zaman took to flight and sought shelter with one of his best supporters named Mulla Ashiq. He surrendered the Shah to Mahmud who by this time had taken Kabul. Shah Zaman, while being carried to Kabul as a prisoner, was met on the way by Asad Khan, a brother of Fatah Khan, who was accompanied by a surgeon. A lance was applied to the Shah's eyes on the spot, and deprived of eyesight. He was shut up in the Bala Hisar. He survived for nearly half a century, and remained for many years a quiet and neglected pensioner of the British Government at Ludhiana.

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CHAPTER 23

Condition of the Country

The foreign invasions

The Panjab witnessed a score of foreign invasions from 1739 to 1799 in sixty years. Nadir Shah invaded India in 1739. Ahmad Shah Durrani attacked her nine times in 1747-48, 1749-50, 1751-1752, 1756-57, 1759-61, 1762, 1764-65, 1766-67, 1768-69. Further he made two border raids in 1770. His son and successor, Timur Shah, led five expeditions in 1774-75, 1779-80, 1780-81, 1785-86, 1788-89. Timur's son and successor, Shah Zaman, entered India four times in 1793-94, 1795-96, 1796-97, 1798-99.

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Nadir Shah came to Delhi. Ahmad Shah Durrani in his first invasion reached Sarhind, in the second up to river Chenab opposite Wazirabad, in the third as far as Lahore, in the fourth to Delhi, Mathura and Agra, in the fifth up to Aligarh and Anupshahar on the Ganga, in the sixth to Malerkotla and Barnala, in the seventh to Kunjpura on the Jamuna, in the eighth to Ismailabad south of Ambala, and in the ninth he halted on the banks of river Jehlam, while his advance-guard marched up to Eminabad, 56 kms from Lahore.

Timur Shah's activities remained confined to the banks of river Indus, Kashmir, Multan, Bahawalpur and Sind. In his first invasion Shah Zaman toured along the river Indus. The second time the Shah halted at Hasan Abdal, while his troops captured Rohtas. In the third invasion he seized Lahore and advanced to Amritsar where he was defeated by the Sikhs. Lastly, he did not go beyond Lahore.

H.M.L. Lawrence[1] remarks:

"One part or other of Northern Hindustan has been continually exposed to the sword, but all the invaders passed through the

[1] *Adventures*, II, 530.

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Punjab ; it has therefore suffered the most, and bears to this day, in almost every quarter, testimony to the blighting effects of war, and its train of ills, pestilence and famine among them."

We see during all these invasions, mainly Panjab alone was the victim of foreign aggression.

Destruction, dissolution and disruption

The foreign hordes varying in strength from fifty thousand to one lakh each time, marched in a solid formation along the Grand Trunk Road. They spread about 50 kms on each side of the road. Thus over this large area no trace of life was left. The inhabitants had either fled away or were murdered in cold blood. Their animals were seized either for transport or slaughtered for meat. Their property was looted or burnt. The timber of houses, wooden doors, and window shutters and trees all served as fuel for cooking meals for lakhs of men each day and for warming up in winter nights. So denuded was the country of trees that Maharaja Ranjit Singh had strictly forbidden cutting of a tree without his permission within a radius of 50 kms of Lahore. To feed their horses no crop was left standing. Even water in wells dried up. While leaving their camp in the morning wells and tanks were filled up with the bones and entrails of animals. Most of the houses were set on fire. The foraging parties moved about to long distances in search of food, fodder, boys and girls.

The centres of population shifted from the plains to the jungles and submontane regions which were generally beyond the easy reach of the invader. Deserted sites were seen everywhere. Even the strongest villagers had to abandon homes where their ancestors had lived for centuries. For instance "out of 221 villages in parganah Karnal, the inhabitants of 178 had been wholly driven from their homes and fields." Every time their departure gave a signal to the people of this province to fly at one another's throat. Might became the only test of right. In the absence of any general controlling authority the country fell a victim to the ambition of rival chiefs, struggling for supremacy. According to an impartial authority "tribe fought with tribe, chief with chief, and village with village. Society lived in a sort of trustless truce broken from time to time by treacherous murders and thievish forays."

The government officials instead of affording protection to the people became themselves chief usurpers and plunderers. There was

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no revenue administration. The collector came at the head of a contingent of troops to realize revenue, and they lived at the cost of the inhabitants as long as their demands were not met. When they had left, other minor officials came to pick up the crumbs. A writer in the *Calcutta Review* observed : ". and through the length and breadth of the land there has been so little motive for improvement or rather for ordinary tillage, that the wonder is whence so much yearly tribute is derived."

The foreign invasions dislocated normal activities of all classes of people. They badly damaged the economy of the province. Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, all were seriously affected. They left a legacy of economic decline and deterioration.

In social sphere, the migration of a large number of Hindus and Sikhs from the western to the eastern and northern districts led to a number of important changes. The density of population considerably declined in the western parts, and increased in the eastern and northern regions. Jammu, Nurpur and Nadaun grew into prominence.

Kashmiri families due to Afghan tyranny settled about this time in certain places, in particular at Jammu, Nurpur, and Amritsar.

The city of Lahore experienced extreme agonies. The miseries of its inhabitants knew no limits due to indiscriminate plunder by the Afghan soldiery. They were restrained by no discipline. They spread anarchy in every quarter of that unfortunate city. Houses underwent all horrors of violence and defilement. Many families were dishonoured by them and very few escaped the infamous practices.

Effect on the character of the people

The destruction of their hearths and homes, crops and gardens, being mere things of the hour, were soon forgotten by the people. But the invaders and government officials left their permanent traces in the temperament of the people. The furious contests for saving honour, life and property were so frequently indulged in by the people that they gradually became bloody-minded. Everybody developed the spirit of faction and aggressiveness. This spirit tinged all their transactions of life. It resulted in mutual quarrels, party strifes, bitter animosities, and blood feuds. An immediate appeal to arms was made in the event of a difference of opinion. They cut the matter short by a stand-up fight among themselves. The large number of violent crimes being committed in the Panjab and mutual contentions are the result of this bloody inheritance by the

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people of this province.

Long years of misrule, impoverishment, grinding oppression and unrelieved misery made the people aggressive, cold and jealous of each other. The universal anarchy touched everybody. Each man had his own standard of virtue. Whatever a man was able to do with impunity appeared to him right. Robbery and theft became common. Whole villages, even whole clans, not only harboured notorious offenders, but openly associated with them. "Cheating, forgery and unnatural offences were considered good jokes."

Sir George Campbell who served as a civil official in the Panjab shortly after the treaty of Amritsar in 1809, observed that he saw a village which paid government revenue in a lump sum outside the gate without permitting any government servant inside. It was divided into different pattis or subdivisions with narrow lanes in which a bullock cart could hardly pass. Each patti was barricaded, because they would not trust one another. Against an outside foe they all combined.

Another trait developed in those days was to enjoy life as best as one could. There was no motive for thrift. The famous couplet prevalent in the country reminded them of it :

Khada pita laheda,
Rahnda Ahmad Shaheda.

(What we eat and drink is our own; the rest is Ahmad Shah's.)

The people spent what they had, and enjoyed good food, fine dresses, kept nice horses and lavishly squandered money on marriages. Regular markets for sale of rose-limbed beauties of northern hills were held in Jammu, Lahore, Delhi and other cities. The rich men in towns and cities and wealthy officials frequently replenished their harems. Diwan Dina Nath, known for sobriety, had 40 concubines.

Rural life was simpler and better. Except in Sikh villages drinking was uncommon. On account of early marriages, restricted seclusion of women, vigilance of old persons, and general character of the people sexual immorality was rare. Thus the domestic life was pure. Prostitution was unknown in rural areas. Women loved gold and silver ornaments. Children and men also wore one or two ornaments.

All classes of people while going out were armed. This feature was observed by George Forster in 1783 :

"How strong the contrast appears in the inhabitants of the Panjab; those even of domestic and laborious professions, are brave, daring and often cruel. Brahmins are the usual soldiers of the country,

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many of whom eat flesh meat ; and they never leave their home even when not employed in military service, without weapons of offence. The merchants and mechanics, when they go but a few miles abroad, are all strongly armed."

Another trait of character developed by the Hindus was sycophancy of their foreign masters. Not to speak of common, illiterate and poor people, even men of learning were not free from this stigma. The historian Shiv Prashad writing in 1776 says that Ahmad Shah Durrani who invaded India "ten or fifteen times in order to carry on a religious war turned India into a paradise."

Two more proverbs of those days were related to Delhi and Kabul:

Ishwara Wāh, Dilishwara Wāh

(The Lord of Delhi is God.)

Kabul de jamyān, nit rahan mahmān

(Those born in Kabul are our constant guests.)

A neighbour implied an enemy. Nobody could look upon his house, land, horse, bullocks or even his wife his own, unless he had the strength to defend them. It was for this reason that the birth of a male child was an event of rejoicing.

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The people of the Panjab were on the whole very poor. This was due to several factors. The plunder and pillage by the invaders as well as by the refractory persons had reduced them to poverty. This state was further aggravated by the exhorbitant demand of revenue by the government, and corruption by government officials. Vicissitude of season resulted in the failure of crops. Epidemics brought about loss of cattle. Marriages and funerals were expensive. If a man led a moderately prosperous life, he had little margin to fall back upon in bad times. Besides the menace of outside danger was always there.

There were certain redeeming features in the character of the people. But they concerned only single villages or to those which were closely allied by matrimonial alliances. They rendered ready help to one another in raising heavy beams for roofing, or for a Persian wheel, in pulling out cattle fallen into a ditch or sunk in mud, in extinguishing a fire, and at the time of epidemics or marriages and deaths, even with money.

If a man's cattle or property was stolen, a group of men joined the victim in following the footsteps of thieves, and in recovering the stolen animals and goods. At ploughing and sowing time they lent bullocks and ploughs. But no such sympathy was shown to the inhabitants of another village. In cases of fire, famine and pestilence

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the caste fellows from other villages supported them. The villagers offered hospitality to the travellers who might be perfect strangers to them. They were put up in the village *dharamsala* or *takia*, and were fed out of the common fund in charge of the headman.

The village

There were few cities in the Panjab, and most of the population was centred in villages. A village was situated on a high mound to overlook the plain. The pathways leading to the village were flanked by thorny fences in order to prevent cattle from breaking into fields. The fields surrounded the village, and they often came up to its walls. Outside were placed enclosures for fodder, crushed wheat stalk or *bhusa* and fuel, mainly dry cattle-dung cakes. Scattered round about were tanks or ponds from which clay for building had been dug out. They were used for watering cattle. The wells for drinking water were inside the village. The village was surrounded by a ditch, often dry, though deep and wide. On crossing the ditch by a removable wooden bridge one faced either a wall around the village or outer walls of houses completely closing it except at the gates. There were only a couple of entrances which were closed at night and in times of danger. Inside various streets debouched in several directions.

Chickens in a Muslim village and pigs in a Jat village were seen running about in the streets. Women and girls brought water from a well in two or three brass or earthen jars placing them on their heads one above the other. In Muslim villages strict purdah was observed. Children principally clad in sunshine, rolling in the dust and playing, was a common sight.

A Panjab village contained three classes. One consisted of the zamindars, who formed the governing class. The mercantile class implied traders, shopkeepers and moneylenders. The artisans and harijans formed the third class. The Khatris were "a very superior class", in the central and western Panjab and in all the Muslim countries of Central Asia. An Afghan accused another Afghan "of stealing his Khatree." The artisan and other inferior classes held land. They had a right of occupancy, but possessed no voice in panchayat. Thus a Panjabi village was a self-sufficient unit, and almost all its requirements were met in the village itself.

A good deal of land belonging to the village was left uncultivated. It was used as a grazing ground for cattle. Only that portion was brought under the plough which could easily be protected by the

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village, and which was just sufficient to meet the needs of the whole village. It was situated in its close vicinity.

In those days nobody in Panjab villages kept extra goods. The people had only a few articles of necessity which could easily be carried on the back of a donkey, pony, bullock or buffalo. On the approach of an invader people fled away into the jungles, deserts or hills. The wealth of people consisted of cattle.

Amid a cluster of villages, one or more villages became notorious as the home of habitual thieves or regular robbers. The whole village or villages combined in predatory excursions. They lifted cattle, stole property, plundered travellers, and let loose their cattle into green crops of other villages. For example Sirhali Kalan in parganah Patti of Amritsar district was one such village. Theft and robbery was the main profession of Nepalis and Dogars of this village. Their depredations took place far and wide. Once the people of Sirhali committed a robbery at Jandiala. Its chief, Niranjania, came at the head of a contingent and a gun. The gun was fixed on the potters *āwa* or hillock of ashes near the derah of jogis. A Sikh villager from the top of a house aimed at Niranjania and shot him dead. His *smadh* was built on the site of his death. Sirhali was first occupied by Singhpurias. After some time it was captured by Bhangis. To control these lawless people they erected a fort one km away from the village. Once Gulab Singh Bhangi, the owner of the estate, was himself plundered. On the death of Gulab Singh Bhangi, Sirhali was seized by Fatah Singh Ahluwalia. Later on Maharaja Ranjit Singh annexed it.

Cattle-lifting was the main profession of thieves, robbers and dacoits. An observer recorded that a single village of Kaithal in Karnal district drove off openly in the day a thousand head of cattle from the territories of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Karnal. They were immediately scattered across the Jamuna among their relatives in the villages of districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Mirath.

The village measures of defence

Almost every villager learnt riding, shooting, wrestling and the use of arms. Matchlocks were kept by the rich, while swords, spears, bows and arrows were found in everybody's possession. Each village was provided with a ditch and a rampart. Generally there was a citadel inside. It was built in a military style, of a quadrangular shape with lofty walls and turrets and it stood in the centre of the village. It was enclosed by a mud wall and sometimes had an outer ditch. Within it

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existed extensive stables. It was occupied by the chief and his retainers.

Where there was no citadel, there stood in the heart of the village one or more round towers according to the population and the size of the village. They were built either of mud or brick and were so high as to overlook the whole neighbourhood. A good look-out was always kept from these watch towers. Some villages in the neighbourhood were closely connected by matrimonial alliances. Then a high tower was built in the central village. It was climbed up by means of a ladder of ropes. As soon as a cloud of dust was seen rising in the distance, the alarm drums were beaten loudly, summoning all the farmers, cowboys with their cattle, and others to seek shelter within the mud walls in their respective villages. By daily occurrence the cattle had become so much accustomed to the sound of the kettledrum that on hearing it they would run into the village of their own free will. The wooden planks were removed from the ditch and all were ready with matchlocks and other arms to face the situation, and fight the enemy. The main target of robbers was to seize cattle, horses and camels. One who obstructed was shot dead or beheaded. If the villagers in a body came to oppose, they would send away the cattle, and would engage themselves in fighting.

The robbers were called *dharwi*. *Dharwis* did not attack a village. In the first place it was difficult to break the gateway of the village or to climb over the wall in the face of armed villagers. Secondly, inside the village every man and woman was ready to fight with some weapons. Thirdly, there was little to be looted. Except coarse grain, few earthen vessels and cots there was nothing else to be seized. Once a robber of Sirhali had carried from the neighbouring village of Banjhpai an earthen receptacle full of three quintals of sesame on his back. Fourthly, the constant beating of the drum would attract the neighbouring villagers to come to their help. In that event the *dharwis* ran the risk of being surrounded on all sides.

The political upheavals of the period compelled the villages to adopt some very striking measures in order to secure immunity from ordinary attacks. They organised inter-marriages with their caste-fellows in such a way that the whole village secured brides from another single village nearby. Thus united by blood they increased their strength considerably. In an emergency a number of whole villages came to the rescue of their relatives. More often than not they were successful in repulsing attacks of the local faujdars or of plundering

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bands. T. Forstescue, Civil Commissioner, Delhi, wrote on 28 April, 1820 :

"By intermarriages and the necessity of a common cause the interests of several villages were identified, and thus leagued they were strong enough to oppose more regular and formidable foes. We know consequently of individual villages having frequently repulsed assaults from the local troops of the Amil and Faujdar and of the forces of many villages united by the *Rooka* (or particular loud cry of the voice) to have been equal to the complete defeat of the best appointed, the most numerous forces that the State could send against them. Such was the union, spirit and desperate bravery of the people."

Another effective method was to seek protection of the robber chieftain of the neighbourhood on payment of a certain amount of money and rendering some manual service. This was a sort of contract agreed to by both the parties. The head of the marauders definitely undertook not to give such people any molestation, and to protect them against any other robber.

Tribal feelings also revived at this time and attained almost the same position as in times of yore. The head of the tribe afforded full protection to his tribesmen who gave him complete loyalty and fidelity. Among Baluchis, Pathans and Jats of the frontier the tribal feelings ran strong because their tribal organisation had not suffered any change due to the disturbed state of the country. The Rajputs also had retained practically their old tribal system. The Jats and Gujars of central Panjab revived it. Among the Sikhs it took the form of loyalty to a misl.

Women

A Jat woman was as good as a man. Campbell on his personal experience observed : "Women are a good deal to the front in Punjaub countries. They are capital workers, sometimes not without education and often insist upon a voice in the family business."—There was no infanticide among Jats, "for in truth a Jat girl was a valuable possession, useful to her possessors, and readily paid for when taken in marriage. I can't conceive why any one should want to infanticide such women."

A Jat girl considered strong physique, courage and bravery as the best qualities in a husband. Hence she deliberately offered herself to such a man, even if he had killed her father and brothers in a foray.

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The proverb says :

Ran hove Jatti

Hor sab chatti

(A Jat wife is the best; All others are a burden.)

The Khatri women were equally brave. Mustafa, the translator of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, who lived in the second half of the eighteenth century, recorded an event which happened to a Khatri lady of Lahore at the hands of an Afghan soldier in the army of Ahmad Shah Durrani :

"The women abused by them in an abominable manner, fled from them, and always preferred a well to an Afghan. Girls of twelve and fourteen have become unmarriageable in their diabolical hands. And we have seen a lady, who rather than submit to such an embrace, fought the Afghan resolutely, although unarmed. He lifted his sabre, and was going to cut her down, when she presented her arm loaded with one of those enormous bracelets, invented by necessity, of two pounds weight of gold, and received the stroke upon the gold, while she struck the man with the other bracelet, and made him bleed; another stroke, another parade, and another heavy blow, a third, and the poor woman fatigued, wounded and spent, was going to fall. Nothing but a miracle could save her, and a miracle, was in fact, wrought instantly. At the moment of the third stroke a Persian, one of the Qazalbash guards, hastening his pace, cried out : In the name of God, most merciful and with one blow made the Afghan's head fly off from his shoulders. The poor woman, who had never been out of her house, and had never set a foot upon a street, marched on, without knowing whither she went, and in the evening, she was lucky enough to find her husband and family, at full twelve kosses from the fatal street. We have spoken to the lady; she is at Lucknow, a Khatrani by clan."

Village community

The sense of insecurity, scanty means of communications and the need of offering resistance to the wandering bands of banditti made the Panjab village self-reliant and self-dependent. Each village turned into a small republic. At the head of a village was a *lambardar* who exercised general superintendence over all the affairs of the village. He settled the disputes of the people, helped the police and collected revenue for the government. The *patwari* kept accounts of land and registered everything connected with it. The watchman kept a watch

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at night, had an eye on bad characters and suspicious persons, was in constant touch with the lambardar, and supplied local information to government officials. The *pandit* or *padha* proclaimed lucky and unlucky days and dates of festivals. The *mullan* or *maulvi* made the prayer call in the mosque, taught children Arabic and performed Muslim ceremonies. The blacksmith and carpenter manufactured agricultural implements, made wood-work of a Persian-wheel and a new house. The grocer supplied grocery, cloth and medicines, stored grain of farmers, kept their accounts and advanced money and corn in an emergency. He was called Shah and was greeted with "Ram, Ram Shah Ji" (May the blessings of God be upon you, my lord!) The barber cut hair and served as a surgeon. The physician, washerman, water-carrier, potter, mirasi, cowboy, cobblers, sweepers were other functionaries. Their remuneration consisted of rent-free land and a fixed share in the produce given at harvest times. The artisans were regarded as public servants of the village community and were required to serve all the members on demand.

The Panchayats

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From time immemorial villages in Northern India have had the democratic form of government by their representatives called panchayat. It was a council of administration by which villages, castes, trade guilds and even armies were managed. It served as a court of arbitration without going to a government court of justice. It was a powerful tribunal without any legal authority. Its decisions were seldom appealed against. If an offender was refractory, he faced the most terrible penalty of total excommunication. The panchayats played an important role in the social regulations of the people. They held their own in peace and war, in the worst times, in the days of anarchy and confusion.

Five has always been the sacred number, and a panchayat means a council of five. A member of the panchayat was called a panch. *Panchon men Parmeshar hai,* was an old saying. It indicated the presence of Divinity in five. It consisted of the most respectable men of tried virtue. The ordinary cases were settled by the lambardar. In case of need he could get help of friends or neighbours of the parties. The weighty affairs were brought before the full panchayat. As a rule there was no division in the panchayat. Discussion was there ample, often eloquent and loud, but eventually the opinion of the more influential members prevailed. The weaker acquiesced in it and the

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result was a unanimous decision.

The panchayat maintained perfect justice and equity in the village. No partiality was shown. It restrained the stronger and helped the weaker against any aggression. As the panchayat sprang up and proceeded from the people themselves, its decisions were implicitly obeyed. Though it was not backed by any special force, yet the social pressure brought to bear upon the offender was so overwhelming that even the most refractory member of the community heard and bore the severest punishment with calm and satisfied looks. In case of disobedience to the panchayat's decision the culprit was declared an outcaste. All the members of the village community refused to associate with him for fear of the same punishment. The village functionaries rendered him no assistance. The menials refused all service. The punishment was never capital.

Once an Englishman, deputy commissioner of a district, was on a tour on horseback. He came across a man with a naked upper part of the body going along the road. The whole of his back was covered with spots like those of smallpox. As this disease strikes only the front parts of the body, he grew curious about it. He stopped his horse and enquired why there were no marks on his face or in front and why they were on his back. The man told him that he had been sentenced by the village panchayat to sleep on iron nails fixed in the ground.

No evidence is available to accuse a panchayat of misconduct and corruption. The Panjab Government records state[1] :

"Injustice or partiality is not charged to these tribunals as consequent or general, and it is no weak proof in their favour that we found a perfect equality amongst the people in rank and fortune. Though some among them had more beeghas of land and wealth than others within their society, yet the owners thereof had no proportionate power, nor did excess of either produce any."

Charles Elliot, Agent to the Governor-General in his Report on Lapsed and Reserved Sikh and Hill States, submitted in 1824, recorded :

"I cannot call to recollection a single instance, during ten years' experience in these States, of a Punchait being convicted of bribery."

Sir George Campbell who served as deputy commissioner in East Panjab in early forties of the nineteenth century wrote :

"The old Indian system of village communities is yet in full force.

[1] *Punjab Government Records, Delhi Residency and Agency*, 1807-1857, I, p. 121.

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Each community has its own internal constitution . . . each is independent of the other. . . each pays its revenue to the powers that be and cares not to inquire too curiously the source from which that power was derived."

He further stated :

"Their system of local government was really, I believe, exceedingly good. I do not by any means say that they were free from the abuses which afflict corporations all over the world. There was often an opposition party who accused the village Punch of various malversations, overcharges for public entertainments, bribes, etc., and such like matters, just as if they had been situated in the London of today; but at any rate I don't think these were worse than in civilised countries, rather I believe that they were not nearly so bad. I could not altogether refuse to listen to such complaints, but did not do so too readily."

He further remarked :

"Certainly my experience of the village institutions on the Sutlej, where perhaps they are at their best, made me appreciate them very much indeed, and think they were not only good for India, but for some other countries as well. In fact I can deliberately say that, far from imposing my ideas on these people, it was from them that I learnt ideas of local self-government which I retain to this day, and which I have brought with me to my native country. I wish that I could see under our Local Government Bills a lower stratum of village institutions, the basis for the whole superstructure."

Besides administering justice, a panchayat rendered valuable and important material help to the members of the village community. This fact is corroborated by T. Forstescue, Civil Commissioner, Delhi, in his report dated 1820. He says :

"No instances occur of a proprietor being driven from the village by oppression or violence of one or any number of other shares; on the contrary, it is observable that they tender each other the most friendly and essential aids when in distress. They will supply cattle, till the lands themselves, contribute money when a sharer has been really unfortunate, and they will assist him in the disposal of his produce, in providing seed, bullocks, and implements, should they be satisfied with him. This feeling, as I have before stated in paragraph 23, is extended to the widow and necessitous family of a deceased sharer, and its effects scarcely surpassed."

It may, however, be pointed out that the philanthropy was limited

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only to its own village. A report stated :

"The village communities, while they held the property of their own society sacred, habitually committed depredations and aggressions on other villages or on travellers, and generally shared the plunder they obtained with the ruling power or principal local authority."

The famine of 1783

In 1781, 1782 and 1783 rains completely failed. The drought became most acute in 1783, and resulted in one of the severest famines known as *Chalisa* as it occurred in 1840 Bikrami year. The famine affected almost the whole of Northern India, but it was extremely acute in the Panjab. Tanks, ponds and even wells ran dry. Cattle perished of hunger and thirst by thousands. Innumerable people died. According to contemporary Harcharan Das thousands of persons died in Delhi alone in five or six days. Children wandered about to feed on berries of the jungle and fell an easy prey to wild beasts who lurked in close neighbourhood of villages in broad daylight. In the south-eastern Panjab the whole country lay in ruins. Small villages were completely deserted. People fled to large villages. "But for the berries found in the wild brushwood, the distress would have been even greater. Stories are told of parents devouring their children; and it is beyond a doubt that children were during this fatal year gladly sold to any one who would offer a few handfulls of grain as their price."

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Some Sikh sardars helped the grief-stricken people. Mahan Singh Sukarchakia gave 100 grams of dry grain to one person daily. Budh Singh Nakai spent all his wealth in feeding the poor.

It rained in March, 1784. A herb known as Markan grew in abundance. People and cattle fed on it. It was dried up for use in an emergency. This herb supported them in April and May. Pilu, a wild fruit sustained people in June and July. Then millets grew in plenty.

The Hazara district was nearly depopulated. During the famine grain was sold at 3 to 4 kg per rupee, and it could be obtained with great difficulty. In Majha or central Panjab wheat was sold from 1 to 2 kg for a rupee. On May 12, 1784, the rate of wheat per rupee at Jammu was 3 kg, at Lahore 2 to 4 kg, at Patiala 9 kg, and at Jind the rates were as follows :

Wheat 5 to 6 kg, gram 5 to 6 kg, barley 6 to 7 kg, and pulses 5 kg. At Delhi, Farrukhabad and Lucknow wheat was sold from 5 to 6 kg for a rupee.

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The famine was followed by a pestilence and cholera. "The country swarmed with bands of robbers and dacoits, and the state of anarchy was almost inconceivable."

An insect called tittan appeared and destroyed all herbage. The cattle ate the insect, and their milk turned blood red.

Hindu, Muslim, Sikh relations

In a village people of all castes and creeds lived amicably. The same village often contained Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Rajput, Jats and people of other castes. On important occasions such as births, deaths, marriages and holy days or festivals they fraternized with one another. On social and religious occasions, they exchanged greetings and presents, and enjoyed festivities in common. This aspect of Panjab village life was observed by H.M.L. Lawrence who in 1840 wrote :

The same village often contains "Hindus, Mahommedans, Rajputs, Jats, etc., calling each other brethren, and on certain occasions associating, and even sometimes intermarrying."

In many cases it was difficult to draw any definite line between various creeds and religions. Distinctions were clearly marked at great religious centres such as Jawalamukhi, Amritsar and Multan, as well as among the educated and official classes. But in the rural population which formed the vast majority in the country, several faiths were so strongly mixed up that one could hardly be distinguished from the other. Thus the Muslim peasantry of the Delhi province was almost Hindu in appearance and ways of living. The Sikh of Hisar district was often a Sikh in speech and looks only. The Hindu of Western Panjab and the frontier was nearly a Musalman except that he avoided beef, married in his class and did not go to a mosque to say prayers.

In a village where the population was almost wholly Musalman, Hindus lived there as good neighbours. Though every Muslim village had its mosque and solemnised marriages according to the law of the holy Quran, Brahmans were frequently employed to find out suitable boys and girls for betrothal. They generally lived in peace except when the feelings of the minority community were injured by killing a cow publicly.

All worshipped the common village deities. Women played an important part in this respect. A Musalman woman who had not offered to the smallpox goddess felt that she had deliberately risked

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her child's life. On special occasions she fed Brahman priests. Similarly a Hindu or a Sikh woman regularly made offerings at the shrines of Muslim saints on every Thursday and at the time of a marriage in the family.

The Muslim chiefs as a rule employed Hindu Diwans to manage their financial affairs. In certain cases matters of purely personal nature were also entrusted to their care. On one occasion Jahan Khan, commander-in-chief of Ahmad Shah Durrani and the de facto ruler of the Panjab, asked Inayatullah, the Syal chief of Jhang, for the hand of one of his sisters in marriage. The proud Syal did not like to establish matrimonial alliance out of his caste and clan. He had three or four sisters unmarried. Jahan Khan knew it. But he told the Durrani general that he had no virgin lady in his family. From Lahore he sent an urgent note to his Diwan Bhawani Das immediately to marry all his sisters to some suitable boys he could find. The Diwan did so in the absence of Inayatullah to the entire satisfaction of his master.

Conclusion

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The most important factor in the political life of a country is its own security and survival as a nation. It is in this respect that the north-western frontier assumes the most important position. No other land frontier anywhere else has contributed so much to shape the life of the people as this frontier has done in India. The foreign invasions across this frontier have greatly affected not only its political life but also its social life, economic life, religious life, spiritual life, its art, literature, language, thought and culture.

The Hindus never took any interest in their north-western frontier right from the time of Mahabharat. It was the policy of no objection to the entry of foreigners. In Hindu literature there is generally no reference to the north-west frontier. If there is any mention at all, it is in derogatory terms.

In the Karan Parva of the *Mahabharata* it is stated that the people of Madra and Gandhara (West Panjab and North-West Frontier Province) were not religious-minded and practised bad manners. They were hated by the inhabitants of Aryavarat (Haryana and U.P.). In chapter 43 of Karan Parva, it is stated : "In their houses people laugh and dance eating beef and drinking wine, eating also Saktu and fish. From the Madra country and in Gandhara purity has disappeared."

In chapter 44 it is further emphasized :

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"One should not go to the Vahika in which the five rivers and the sixth Indus flow, as it is unpurified by the Himalayas, by the Ganga, by the Yamuna, and by the Sarasvati, and as it is void of true religion and cleanliness." "An Arya should not reside for two days in the Aratta Vahika country where a Brahman becomes a Kshatriya and then a Vaisya and then a Sudra and finally a barber and a Brahman again."[1] This contempt for Panjab was perhaps due to the conduct of Kaikai of Ramayana who was a Madra princess from Sialkot district and Gandhari, mother of Kaurva brothers, who hailed from Taxila-Peshawar region.

Panini, the celebrated Sanskrit grammarian, though born and brought up in Gandhara on the banks of river Indus, does not speak about this frontier. His grammatical examples mention many other places and people outside Panjab. Chanakya belonged to Taxila where he was professor of political science. He describes countries as far south as Kerala, but he is completely silent about this frontier. Vatsyayana in his Kamasutra gives a fine account of various customs and practices of sex life in many parts of India except the north-west frontier. Kalidas, the greatest dramatist, gives an accurate description of mountains and hills, rivers and dales, towns and cities, when he orders his cloud in Meghadut to fly from Ramagiri to the Himalayas. But his cloud messenger did not enter the Panjab. The later literature also ignores it.

The people of the Panjab bore the brunt of all the foreign invasions from the north-west. They would not easily part with their wealth and women. They put up the most stubborn resistance and exhausted the military power and material resources of the enemy within the land of the five rivers. As a result little enthusiasm was left in the invader to proceed farther. The Iranians could not advance beyond river Beas. It took Alexander the Great ten months in advancing from the Hindukoh to the Indus, and nineteen months to subdue the Panjab.[2] He had taken as much time in reducing Asia Minor (Turkey), Syria, Iran, Sistan, Afghanistan and Bactria (Turkistan) as he took in subduing the Panjab. His soldiers were so much frustrated that they declined to cross the river Beas.

Alexander's greatest general Seleukos could not go beyond river Indus. He was forced to give away his daughter in marriage to

[1]Quoted by C.V. Vaidya in his *History of Medieval Hindu India*, III, 131.
[2]V.A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, 120.

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Chandragupta Maurya and three provinces of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Makran in dowry. To see that his daughter was not ill-treated in a foreign country, he left Megasthenes to look after her. The Greek king Menander established his capital at Sialkot. The capital of Kushans was at Peshawar. The headquarters of the Huns was at Taxila. The Arabs remained confined to Sind and Multan. Mahmud of Ghazni plundered a large part of northern India, yet he could not establish his empire beyond the Ravi. Muhammad Ghori was assassinated in the Panjab. The Slaves, Khaljis, Tughlaks and Lodis ruled over Northern India, but their religious zeal had been consumed in the Panjab. Babar could seize Delhi after invading the Panjab five times. The Mughals could maintain themselves in power by recruiting soldiers, generals and administrators from their homeland in Central Asia. Their religious zealotry was spent in fighting in the Panjab. Mainly political stimulant remained. The main current of religious fanaticism of Muslim invaders was reduced into ripples, having lost its vigour and vitality in the Panjab.

This fact was clearly observed by the famous Urdu poet, Altaf Husain Hāli of Panipat, when he wrote :

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Woh Din-e-Hijazi[1] kā bebāk beṛā, Na Sehun peh atkā, na Jehun[2] peh thaira; Kiye pār the jis ne sāton samundar, Woh dūba dahāne men Ganga ke ākar.

[The fearless fleet of the religion of Hijaz did not stop either on the Sehun or on the Jehun. Having crossed seven seas, it sank in the mouth of the Ganga.]

The Muslim view of north-western frontier was of welcome to their brethren from across the passes. Their supremacy in India depended upon them. During the Muslim rule of about eight hundred years almost all the lucrative posts both in the civil and military administration were filled by foreign Muslims. The Muslims of Indian origin were generally treated as pariahs.

The Sikh view was to put a stop to the ingress of all foreigners into their homeland. The foreign Afghan hordes stood on the heights of Khaibar Pass. The Mughals anxiously waited to extend their greetings to them from the ramparts of the Red Fort. But the twin were separated by the nativeland of the long-haired guardians of the

[1]Hijaz is a province of Arabia in which the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina are situated.

[2]Sehun and Jehun are two rivers of Turkistan.

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North-West Frontier. The two halves looked in despair at Peshawar and Delhi to meet each other. Their eyes could meet only in the new moon of Id. As a result the foreign hordes starved for money and the Mughals starved for want of fresh blood to regenerate themselves.

The regional historian has only one solution to offer for the ever-recurring north-west frontier problem. It is to hurl back the aggressor with the utmost retribution, and to consign the two basic principles of Hinduism, *Dayā dharam kā mūl hai*, and *Om Shanti, Shanti*, as well as the general policy of appeasement, into the bottom of Indian Ocean. This is the only way to preserve India's independence and integrity. The safety of the state is the highest law.

Ram, Krishan, Gobind,
Jai Bharat, Jai Hind.

[Ram killed the external foe; Krishan crushed the internal one. Gobind Singh's Khalsa closed the gateways upon the external enemy, and clubbed the internal one.]

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